J.L. Mehta

Advanced Study in the History of Medieval India

Vol. III: Medieval Indian Society and Culture

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This is the third and concluding part of a three-volume study on Medieval Indian History by Dr J.L. Mehta, the first two volumes of which were brought out in 1979 and 1981, respectively. It gives a glimpse of the medieval Indian society and culture during the period 1000 to 1707 A.D., the political and military history of which has been given in the preceding volumes. The subject-matter of this book emerges, like the flowering of a plant, from the political background provided by the first two volumes of the series.

According to the author, the socio-cultural development of a people can be understood better within the framework of the political system to which they belong; it is in this context that he strives to point out the social content in the state policies of the medieval Indian rulers and gives an absolutely unconventional treatment to the subject of his study. The age-old notions about the traditional elements of medieval Indian society and culture have been re-examined and re-interpreted by the author in his own original style. Together with a detailed survey of the sources, glossary and an elaborate index the volume makes a rich contribution to the advancement of historical literature.

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Advanced study in the

HISTORY OF MEDIEVAL INDIA

Medieval Indian Society and Culture

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History of Medieval India

Medieval Indian Society and Culture

(v.3)

J.L. Mehta
M.A. Ph.D.

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Preface to the Second Edition

The three-volume publication entitled *Advanced Study in the History of Medieval India* has caught the imagination of the readers. The growing popularity of these books among the post-graduate students and researchers in the history of medieval India is evidenced by the ever increasing correspondence of the author with them as also by the challenge of press reviews and constructive criticism from scholars from various parts of the country. The author highly appreciates comments on and critical evaluation of his books by those interested in the subject; he always bears in mind their valuable suggestions for qualitative improvement of the material, wherever necessary.

The author has been told by the publishers that his books have been put on the export list and that these have started earning foreign exchange. It is really encouraging to note that a reconstruction and interpretatxon of Indian history by a son of the soil should measure up to the international academic standards and find favour with the scholars of advanced countries, *albeit* this success may be attributed equally to the resourcefulness and enterprise of Sterling Publishers but for whose dedication and professional expertise it would not have been possible to bring out the books in the shape in which these have been placed in the hands of the scholars.

We are passing through a very serious socio-cultural and national crisis today. The rising tide of fundamentalism, regional and parochial outlook, and the racial and linguistic controversies threaten the very fabric of composite Indian culture and the concept of secular nation-state, evolved laboriously by one of our ancestors—Akbar the Great, and so fondly cherished by the modern Indian leadership This book does not have a direct bearing on all these aspects; nevertheless, it may provide, in historical perspective, an insight into the causes and remedies of some of these problems to the readers.

Chandigarh,
January 26, 1987

J.L. Mehta

Preface to the First Edition

With a sense of fulfilment and great satisfaction, the author presents to his readers the third and concluding part of his Advanced Study in Medieval Indian History, the first two volumes of which were brought out in 1979 and 1981 respectively. It gives a glimpse of the medieval Indian society and culture during the period 1000 to 1707 A.D.; the political and military history of which has been given in the preceding volume. The subject-matter of this book emerges, like the flowering of a plant, from the political background provided by the first two volumes of the series.

Socio-cultural development is a continuous phenomenon, a slow and steady process, for the study of which periodisation on the basis of political and military episodes or upheavals is not always feasible. No military action or political change, however sudden or violent, can mark either the abrupt ending of a cultural state or pinpoint the transplantation of new socio-cultural trends among the people affected by it. The author is, therefore, conscious of the fact that the arab conquest of Sind or invasions of Mahmud of Ghazni or Muhammad Ghori signal neither the beginning nor ultimate outcome of the multifarious social forces at work in the life of the Indians; these events or political developments can, nevertheless, be earmarked as important milestones in the long and chequered course of the Indian social stream like that of the Ganges from Kailash to the bosom of the Indian Ocean. In his attempt to understand the socio-cultural development of medieval Indian society in its historical perspective, the author was actually confronted with the intriguing problems of the forceful and continuous temporal dynamics of socio-religious and cultural change in India. Sometimes these political developments gave birth to or accelerated the forces of social change while the others were themselves the outcome of such forces at work in the preceding period. The state does play an important role in shaping the character and life of its people, and the author has taken pains, in the first chapter of this study, to explain how the socio-cultural development of a people can be understood better within the framework of a political system to which they belong. It is in this context that he strives to point out the social content in the state policies, military campaigns and administrative set-up of the *mamluk* sultans, the *khaljis*, the *tughluks*, the rulers of Bahmani and Vijayanagar kingdoms, and the imperial *mughals* respectively. An appreciation of this line of approach may make the unconventional chapter-plan of this volume intelligible to the readers and enable them to find out the

explicit and implicit elements of the medieval Indian society and culture as it finally assumed the shape during the age of Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan.

A brief resume on the *survey of the sources*, which precedes the text in all of the three volumes of this study by way of an *introduction*, may give an idea to the scholars of history, particularly the subject-specialists, of the deep involvement of the author in the field of his study and research. As a matter of fact, it reveals but a tip of the iceberg of the source-material on medieval Indian history which the author has built over the last twenty-five years of his academic career. It may require yet another set of three fairly big volumes to be reproduced in print, and the author wonders if any private publisher would undertake its publication without a substantial grant from UGC, ICHR or some other agency. The readers would be amused to know that the author, with a peculiar craze, continues to prepare and pile up this material and much besides in the files and packets marked: *To Be Published Posthumously*; of course, sometimes he does succeed in pushing a handful of the stuff through the press.

Let it be recorded once again by way of a pledge that the author is fully conscious of his duty towards the society and the posterity to conduct himself as an honest and objective historiographer and teacher; it is in this spirit that he has dedicated this three-volume study to his maternal grandchildren, Paras and Daisy—the two innocent children of angelic virtues, the custodians of future India and the hope of mankind in the twenty-first century. They provide him with much-needed relief and recreation in the midst of his tiresome studies and inspire him to carry on his *yog-sadhana* as a *karamyogi*.

In the end, the author regards it as his pleasant duty to express his gratitude to Shri O.P. Ghai, Chairman, Sterling Publishers, who undertook the publication of this three-volume study; but for the keen interest taken by him personally in this costly enterprise, it might not have been possible to present it to the readers in such decently produced and handy volumes in beautiful print as has been done.

E 34, Sector 14,
Chandigarh

J.L. Mehta

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Introductory

1 : MEDIEVAL INDIA — THE MEETING GROUND OF TWO CULTURES

Advent of Islam

The advent of Islam was an epoch-making event in the history of the world; it exercised a profound effect on the political, religious and socio-cultural life of India as well. The invasions of Muhammad bin Qasim (711-12), Mahmud of Ghazni (1000-1027) and Muhammad Ghori (1175-1205) marked not only the clash of arms between the rajputs 'the sword-arm of India', and the muslim invaders but also the violent contact between the two strong religious thoughts and streams of cultural forces. From confrontation to cooperation, followed by interaction and synthesis between the two forces, constitute the various stages in the long and chequered socio-cultural history of medieval India which forms the theme of this volume. The period under review exhibits the slow and steady decay of ancient hindu society, with its 'glorious' *rajput culture*, giving place to the *Indo-Muslim Society and Culture* which was neither hindu nor muslim but Indo-Muslim, to be very precise.

Political Background

Ancient India presented a very dismal picture on the eve of the muslim invasions. Its political disintegration had set in with the death of Skanda Gupta (555-67); the exit of Harsha Vardhana (606-47) and Pulakesin II (c. 610-42) closed the era of national unity as also of ancient Indian civilisation and culture. Abortive attempts were made by a number of individuals, backed by their respective clans and communities, to revive imperial traditions at Kanauj or elsewhere. On the ruins of Harsha's empire, one Yasovarman (c. 700-70) tried to reunite northern India under one government with head quarters at Kanauj; he was a contemporary of king Dahir of Sind. After the conquest of Sind by the arabs, Yasovarman and king Lalitaditya of Kashmir (725-55) stemmed the tide of their advance in northern India. It seems that, soon afterwards, the two princes fell out with each other and Yasovarman was killed in a battle by his adversary. With his death, there started a triangular contest for

the occupation of Kanauj among the rashtrakutas of Deccan, the gurjara-pratiharas of Malwa and the palas of Bengal. Ultimately, a gurjara-pratihara chief, Nagabhatta (725-40) conquered Kanauj and laid the foundation of the imperial dynasty of his clan; his successors revived the imperial glory of Kanauj to a limited extent. Rajyapala, the last ruler of this dynasty succumbed before Mahmud of Ghazni (1018-19) and was put to death by the princes of Gwalior and Kalinjar for having shown cowardice in acknowledging the overlordship of the invader.

Absence of Central Authority

Apart from the tottering kingdom of Kanauj, India, on the eve of the muslim invasions, was parcelled out into numerous regional states and petty principalities, most of whose chiefs and the ruling elite, irrespective of their race, caste, community or tribe have usually been referred to as the *rajputs*. For instance, Dahir, the first great rajput chief who faced the arab invasion of Sind (711-12), was a brahman by caste. The heroic resistance put up by him and his entire family, including the womenfolk, in the defence of their tiny little state, constitutes a glorious chapter in the history of the *rajput period* (647-1200). The rajputs of Zabulistan (southern Afghanistan), who encountered the arab invaders through Siestan and the Bolan pass in 867-70, belonged to the bhatti clan, whereas, Jaipal and Anangpal, the Hindushahi rulers of Kabul and Punjab, on the eve of the turkish invasions, were brahmans; they acted as a bulwark against the turkish onslaught on the northwestern borders of India for a long time. The feudal rajput states were usually identified with their ruling clans, tribes or communities. Their love for personal freedom, vanity and inflated ego did not permit the rajputs to subordinate their interests or pay obedience to their more capable leaders. They, in general, lacked political foresight and displayed absence of an overall national consciousness. Terms like 'patriotism', 'motherland' and 'the state' had assumed narrow parochial or regional connotations with the rajputs. As a result, there were constant wars and clannish feuds among them which hampered the growth of national unity and the emergence of a strong national state in India. The various clans or the feudal lords went to war or fought the duels simply to show off their military prowess or muscle power respectively. The rajputs converted mutual warfare into a sort of sport in which valuable resources in men and material were laid waste and military strength neutralised. Because of these self-destructive and rather suicidal tendencies, they failed to take concerted action against the muslim invaders. The frequent changes in the ruling dynasties or princes within the same ruling house were not conducive to the development of a feeling of loyalty or emotional attachment towards them among the large mass of their subjects. In the face of territorial claims and counter claims of the rival chieftains, 'might' became 'the supreme right' and 'the dispute' as to what was right was decided 'by the arbitrament of war'. A petty principality, on

having got an ambitious and capable prince, would throw off the overlordship of its mighty neighbour and, in turn, claim some sort of dominance over the weaker and smaller states. Such claims of paramountcy were seldom well-defined and usually not pushed beyond tolerable limits. The weaker states, therefore, did not always dispute or offer much resistance to the vague imperial claims of their powerful neighbours. The whole process had a demoralising effect on all the rulers, big or small. There was no military power in the country strong enough to keep the warring princes in check and coordinate their activities against foreign aggression.

Lack of Creative Leadership

The Indian society,since the death of Harsha to the muslim conquest of nortern India, from 647 to 1200 A.D.; has often been styled the *rajput civilisation* which is a misnomer. The rajputs, who provided socio-political leadership to the Indian society, constituted but a fraction of it. They preserved some excellent socio-cultural traits of the past and contributed what may be called the *rajput culture* to the ancient Indian civilisation. As for the latter, the period of renaissance and social rejuvenation witnessed by it was long over with the decline of the Gupta Empire. The period that followed marked a *status quo* in the social and cultural development of the country. It presented the picture of 'a regulatory society' whose socio-political leadership ceased to be creative in its outlook and became lethargic in performance. The social virtues attributed to the rajput were not universal; these were confined mostly to the ruling elite and upper strata of the otherwise caste-ridden society. Toynbee refers to the caste-system of the hindus as 'a social enormity' which had disrupted its social unity; its various castes and sub-castes were divided into watertight compartments. They did not inter-marry nor shared food with one another. The people belonging to the high castes suffered from superiority complex; they looked down upon the low-castes and even exploited them; untouchability was, of course, the worst form of discrimination exercised by them against the poor and destitute at the lowest rung of the society. The multitudes of the hindus, therefore, did not add to their social strength because they stood like a house divided against itself. In the words of Toynbee,

"...impact of religiosity upon the institution of caste in India must have aggravated the banefulness of the institution very seriously. Caste is always on the verge of being a social enormity; but when caste is 'keyed up' by receiving a religious interpretation and a religious sanction in a society which is hag-ridden by religiosity, then the latent enormity of the institution is bound to rankle into a morbid social growth of poisonous tissue to monstrous proportions."[1]

No wonder, more than half of the hindu populace stood forth as mere spectators when the rajput warriors had to fight a life and death struggle against the muslim invaders. Their social and national vision had become so narrow that they did not consider themselves to be responsible for the defence of their own hearths and homes. Had the rajput princes and the social leadership of the country inspired respect and confidence among the masses and the latter identified their interests with those of the rajput states, the Indian society would not have collapsed like a house of cards in the face of foreign aggression. As a matter of fact, the Indian society, as a whole put up a very poor show at the time of national catastrophe and failed to act as a well-knit, self-disciplined and mature society because of its internal weaknesses which had sapped its vitality. In spite of its outward magnificence and social stability, it had become hollow from within.

Victory of Islam

India, on the eve of the muslim invasions, presented the case of a rich country with poor masses and still poorer defence. Its fabulous wealth, weak political structure, and 'petrified society' extended an open invitation to the muslim invaders to lay their hands on its poorly defended treasures. Needless to say, it stood a very poor chance of survival in its grim struggle against the forces of Islam. The arabs and turkish invaders were full of religious zeal and they displayed superiority over their Indian adversaries in many respects. They possessed better military organisation, discipline and coherence. They invariably followed one leader and fully realised the value of unity of command. Their leaders were well-acquainted with the latest techniques of warfare, and they took keen interest in updating their knowledge in this respect. Fired by missionary spirit and enthusiasm to spread Islam by force, they sincerely believed that, if successful in the holy war (*jehad*), this world would lie at their feet, otherwise, they would attain martyrdom in their death and go straight to paradise (*jannat*). Thus the invaders fought for a cause while the rajputs had nothing better than clan or class interests to defend. The muslim warriors fought as desperados. They were conscious of the fact that they had to fight in a foreign land; therefore, if defeated, they might not be able to return alive to their country. No wonder, victory kissed their feet almost at every step.

The arabs, who had been 'the carriers of Indian trade' with Europe for centuries, were the first to cast their covetous eyes on Sind and the rich seaports of western India, after their conversion to Islam. Nevertheless, the conquest of Siestan, Sind and Multan proved 'a mere episode in the history of India'[2] though it was not so in the history of Islam. All the subsequent attempts of the arab chiefs to expand their possessions and penetrate into the heart of the country were foiled by the Indian princes. The arabs were 'not destined to raise Islam to be a political force in India' [3] They were

fascinated by the socio-cultural advancement and high moral character of the hindus and buddhists who were granted the status of *zimmis* by them. Gradually, the Indian began to be associated with the administration, thus leading to the establishment of cordial relations between the rulers and the ruled. It set the stage for the ultimate cultural victory of the Indians over their new masters. The brahman scholars and buddhist sages began to educate the arab ruling elite and their wards in Indian languages and literature, philosophy, astronomy, mathematics, medicine and other sciences. It led to the dissemination of Indian sciences and cultural values to the foreign lands. The Indian numerals, called *Hindse* (e.g; from India) were learnt by them from here and transmitted to Europe. Indian books were translated into Arabic and carried to the muslim countries for propagation of knowledge. When the arabs had conquered Sind, 'they were no champions of a new culture or civilisation', but, with the passage of time, they did become the cultural ambassadors of India to the muslim world and Europe. Their religious fanaticism was also diluted by the friendly social conduct and liberal religious outlook of the Indians. The arab settlers of Sind and Multan were thoroughly Indianised. They employed Indian architects and adopted Indian architectural concepts wholesale in the matter of construction of their residences, public buildings and the magnificent mosques. They adopted and patronised Indian music and other fine arts.

The arab settlements in Sind and Multan made Islam a part and parcel of the Indian religious life, though confined to a part of the country only, to begin with. Many an Indian, within the conquered territories, embraced Islam voluntarily; its peaceful propagation was carried on by the muslim saints and the *ulama* in other parts of India too. The arabs made a settlement in the Malabar, converted a local chieftain, and established a foothold for Islam there long before the armies of Alauddin Khalji penetrated into the Deccan.

The conciliatory attitude of the arabs enabled them to win the confidence of the conquered populace who were quickly reconciled to the *fait accompli*. Until liquidated by the turks, the small muslim states of Mansurah (Sind) and Multan enjoyed three centuries of peaceful existence in the neighbourhood of mighty rajput kingdoms primarily because of the support extended to them by their Indian subjects. For the latter, the arabs were not the *mlechhas*—'the impure', whereas, three centuries later, Mahmud of Ghazni and his turkish marauders were universally condemned as the *mlechhas*, as per the testimony of Alberuni, because of the inhuman barbarities committed by them on the people. Nevertheless, it were Subuktagin and Mahmud of Ghazni who shook the entire political fabric of northern and western India. The Hindushahis, the heroic defenders of Punjab and Kabul, perished; and Khyber pass, the *Gateway of India*, was lost to the foreigners for ever. The powerful and proud rajput princes were defeated,

humiliated or liquidated, resulting in the disintegration of their states. It exposed the political division and disunity of the country. The defective military structure and poor leadership of the rajputs took a heavy toll of their martial talent; thousands of brave warriors laid down their lives in the battlefields; those who survived felt thoroughly humiliated and demoralised. The citizens were massacred in cold blood by the marauders who took thousands with them as slaves, to be sold in the markets of Baghdad, Samarkand and Bukhara. Flourishing cities were laid waste; magnificent temples were plundered and desecrated, and the centuries-old edifices of art, architecture and culture were ruined. The entire habitats were razed to the ground and millions of people rendered homeless and hearthless while within their own country. Quite a few were forcibly converted to Islam. Long after the departure of Mahmud, northern India must have presented the picture of a vast refugee camp. The problems of resettlement of the uprooted people must have baffled the petty chieftains who lacked moral courage, resources and foresight to help their subjects. One shudders to think of the sad plight of the unfortunate Indians of those days who did not have the benefit of a country-wide national government to look after their interests and soothe their injured sentiments. A whole civilisation was fatally wounded and left bleeding.

After the death of Mahmud, India enjoyed respite for over a century and a quarter (1030-1175) from foreign invasions; it afforded a golden opportunity to the leadership of 'hindu India' to overhaul the political set-up of their country. The rajput princes and other regional rulers were given a chance to *rally* and be prepared to defend their independence against future foreign onslaughts: more than enough time was thus allowed to the Indians to shed their regional outlook and set their house in order on national considerations. That seemed to be the only way to safeguard their national independence and protect their civilisation and culture. This was, however, not to be. The Indian socio-political leadership failed to rise to the occasion: they learnt nothing from the humiliation suffered at the hands of Mahmud of Ghazni nor forgot anything about their traditional caste prejudices, and other divisive and self-destructive tendencies. Once again, they exhibited a lack of creativity in tackling the problems of national defence. As soon as the foreign danger was over, numerous rajput chiefs jumped into the field to measure their swords in the traditional feudal style. Some of them were ambitious and successful warriors but devoid of statesmanship or diplomatic skill to earn recognition as the national rulers of the country, while majority of them were the typical feudal lords of average capabilities who exhibited parochial or clanish mentality. They were almost always at daggers drawn with each other; and they wasted their valuable resources in men and material in internecine wars. They often failed, even within their own dominions, to provide adequate relief to the uprooted and badly mauled subjects

needing rehabilitation. They did not lack the resources perhaps, *albeit* they proved themselves to be void of creative thinking and moral courage to guide the people. As a result, India presented an equally dismal picture in 1175 when the turks struck the country for the second time, now under the leadership of Muhammad Ghori and his brilliant 'slave' officers who swept across the whole of northern India. Torn by mutual jealousies, dissensions and other self-destructive habits, the rajputs failed to take concerted action against the invaders and, in the consequence, were crumbled to dust, one by one, in quick succession, under the iron heels of the turks.

Toynbee, while analysing the circumstances leading to the fall of the great civilisations, expresses the view that 'no foreign invasion' had ever been the cause of their collapse; 'it simply gave the *coup d' grace*.' The eleventh and twelfth centuries presented the last phase of the declining ancient Indian civilisation and culture, during which Toynbee's formula of '*Beat—Rally—Rout*'[4] played its full circle. Throughout this period, the uncreative political leadership of the country was faced by a recurring challenge which it repeatedly failed to meet. At the first holocaust (Mahmud of Ghazni's invasions), it failed the country and, at the next crisis (Muhammad Ghori's invasions), it 'went to pieces irretrievably. In the words of Toynbee.

> "The criminal intent of...the turks may have been fully as heinous as is commonly alleged; but there is reason to doubt the effectiveness of their criminal action; for there is reason to believe that the alien body-social into which they plunged and replunged their swords, was the body of a suicide whose life-blood was already ebbing away through a self-inflicted wound."[5]

The learned historian explains the 'self-inflicted wound' of the suicidal body-social of the hindus as follows :

> "...about the middle of the twelfth century of the Christian Era, the Hindu powers...had fallen into an internecine warfare with one another...this fatal division of the House of Hinduism against itself made it possible for the turkish highwaymen to force an entry...If in the twelfth century, the Rajputs had not turned their swords suicidally upon themselves, the Hindu world might have continued, without any undue drain upon its energies, to keep the turks at bay, and to work out its own destinies under its own control. And thus the verdict proves, on appeal, to be suicide instead of assassination."[6]

The breakdown of the political and military structure of northern India was followed quickly by the disintegration and decay of ancient Indian civilisation and culture. Toynbee describes

this outcome as due to 'the nemesis of creativity' among the demoralised political leadership and exploitative priestly class among the brahmins who controlled the socio-religious life of the hindus. To use the phraseology of Toynbee once again, the socio-political leadership of the hindus 'had lost its claim to the mimesis of the society at large; nevertheless, it insisted on imposing its will on the society'; it 'marked the most fateful occurrence' in the life-history of ancient Indian civilisation.[7]

Era of Conflict Between the Two Cultures

The Indian possessions of Muhammad Ghori were inherited by his turkish 'slave' officer Qutubuddin Aibek who set up as an independent ruler at Lahore and untagged his dominions from the apron-strings of the Ghurid empire. His son and successor, Aram Shah, was overthrown by Altumish, a 'slave' officer of Aibek, who transferred his capital to Delhi in 1211 A.D.; thus bringing into existence what is called the 'sultanate of Delhi'.[8] The period of rule of the *mamluk* or *slave* sultans (1206-90) was marked by tension and serious conflict between the foreign muslim settlers and hindus of the Indo-Gangetic valley. Soon after the birth of the sultanate, the turks were cut off from their ancestral lands of central Asia which were overrun by the mongols. Altumish and Balban, the founders of the second and the third *mamluk* dynasties respectively, made a signal contribution towards the consolidation of the turkish rule in northern India and its protection from the mongol menace. Before the turn of the century, the muslim immigrants, under the leadership of the turkish aristocracy, were well-established in *Hindustan* which they adopted as the country of domicile.

Social Stability and Interaction Between Cultures

The *mamluk* sultans of Delhi were foreign rulers; they established the dominance of foreign turkish ruling elite in Delhi. The accession of Jalaluddin Khalji in 1290 signified a revolution in the muslim politics because it sounded the death-knell of the privileged turkish nobility who had perpetuated their dominance for nearly a century. The khaljis, though turks by race, belonged to the muslim-masses of India; they were cent per cent Indian muslims. Considered from this angle, it would not be wrong to say that, with the establishment of the Khalji dynasty, there started an era of 'muslim rule' in Delhi as compared with the 'turkish rule' of the earlier phase. Alauddin Khalji transformed the sultanate into an empire by his military prowess, wisdom and strenuous efforts. He established Islam as a political force in the south which assumed the form of a religious and cultural force as well during the reign of Muhammad bin Tughluq. Alauddin liberalised the state politics by throwing open the public services to commoners, including the unprivileged muslim immigrants, Indian converts to Islam and even the hindus. These two great sultans of dynamic personalities exercised a profound

influence, through their state policies, on the political, socio-economic and cultural life of their subjects. Their civil administration, land revenue and other fiscal reforms, and the Deccan policies are so rich in *social content* that no serious scholar of medieval Indian society and culture can afford to ignore them; these aspects have, accordingly, been highlighted at their appropriate place in the foregoing pages of this study. Firoze Tughluq was intolerant towards the hindus; nevertheless, he was a philanthropist who utilised the resources of the state for public welfare activities from which the Indian masses, including the hindus, benefited a lot. The fourteenth century, which covers the period of rule of the Khalji and the Tughluq dynasties, thus forms a turning point in the history of socio-cultural development of India. During this period, conflict between the two cultural forces—immigrant Islam and the indigenous Hinduism, was replaced first by stalemate and then mutual toleration. It gradually set the stage for interaction and give-and-take between them; before long, new forces for bringing about synthesis between the two streams took their birth. The subsequent decline and disintegration of the sultanate, instead of proving harmful, gave rather an impetus to the forces of socio-cultural synthesis between the hindus and the muslims and increased their inter-dependence. The political power of the muslims was decentralised and shifted to the headquarters of the erstwhile *iqtas* or provinces of the sultanate which gave birth to provincial or regional 'muslim states'. By the fifteenth century, Islam as a socio-cultural force was firmly rooted in the soil, after its thorough Indianisation. The muslims constituted a part and parcel of the Indian society, which was neither hindu nor muslim but Indo-Muslim society, so to speak. The foreign Islamic culture and traditions, were now intermingled freely with the ancient Indian or hindu culture, and these became acceptable to the Indian society, in general. The regional muslim monarchs and muslim aristocracy were mostly Indian in blood, thought and attitude; very few of them traced their foreign pedigree or claimed dominant position in the society on that account; they were Indian muslims in every respect. Many of the regional and provincial rulers of the fifteenth century, whether hindus or muslims, were enlightened and benevolent monarchs who worked for the welfare and happiness of their people and enjoyed their goodwill in abundant measure. They patronised scholars and artists without religious discrimination and helped in the socio-cultural, moral and material advancement of the society.

Amir Khusrau, the first prominent representative of the Indo-Muslim society and culture, flourished during the reigns of the Khalji and the Tughluq sultans. Urdu, a common literary heritage of hindus and muslims, and a symbolic representation of cultural synthesis between Hinduism and Islam, was born during this period. The sultans of Delhi were great builders. They founded many new towns in various parts of the country which became flourishing centres of trade and commerce. Their architectural

monuments reveal a vigorous interaction and synthesis between the foreign Islamic and ancient Indian archaeological traditions and concepts; these are an index of a healthy and constructive give-and-take between the two art styles as alsothe communion that took place between hindus and muslims during the early medieval age. The *Bhakti* reformers and *Sufi* saints took up the cause of socio-religious reforms and hindu-muslim unity about this time. They attempted to bridge the gulf between the two communities at the socio-cultural level. Accordingly, the socio-cultural development of the Indo-muslim society in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries is much more fascinating than the political history of the times.

The Mughal Rule

Advent of the mughals was a great event in the history of medieval India. *Babarnama*, which has rightly been acclaimed as the most authentic historical narrative, gives a vivid picture of the political, socio-cultural and economic condition of India on the eve of the establishment of the *mughal rule* in Delhi. Babar, who was a very intelligent, objective and critical observer of things, did not fail to notice the growing consciousness of a common nation-hood among the hindus and muslims of India; he draws a sharp distinction between the use of the words, *Hindis*-viz: 'the people of India' or 'the Indian nationals' and *Hindus*, who constituted by far the most numerous section of the *Hindis*. He makes a frequent use of the term *Hindis*—a popular usage of the times, in his *memoirs* while making reference to the Indian citizens irrespective of whether they were hindus, muslims or those belonging to some other religious denominations. It shows indeed a remarkable development in the socio-cultural relations of hindus and muslims which constituted the social heiritage of the *imperial mughals* in India, on the foundations of which Akbar built the grand edifice of a secular national state at a later stage Babar, though a foreign conquerer, at once felt at home in Delhi and readily adopted India as a country of his domicile while his descendants not only showed fondness for being thoroughly Indianised even in blood and breed but also displayed nationalistic sentiments and identified their interests with those of the sons of the soil. Sher Shah Suri, the forerunner of Akbar in the achievement of his objectives as national ruler, was himself a product of the age; his period of rule symbolises the seed-time of the concept of common Indian nationhood among the hindus and muslims of the country. The *mughal period* was marked by two centuries of freedom from external invasions and an enduring peace within the empire. It enabled the *great mughals* to bring about political unification of India by the corporate activity of the nationalist forces, including hindu and muslim, under their benign control. The political unity was consolidated by the evolution of uniform system of administration, good government, and the steel-frame of all-India services. Beginning with Akbar, the *imperial mughals* strengthened the forces

of national integration and solidarity through equitable treatment towards their subjects, complete religious toleration and the secular state policy. It provided a requisite environment for the socio-cultural advancement, economic prosperity and all-round development of Indians in every walk of their national life. The *imperial mughals* played a premier role in accelerating the process of synthesis between the exotic Islamic traditions and ancient Indian culture: they made invaluable contributions towards the growth and development of the Indo-Muslim society and left an indelible mark on the socio-cultural institutions of the times. An humble attempt has been made in the foregoing pages of this study to give a glimpse of the medieval Indian society and culture in its historical perspective.

2: SURVEY OF THE SOURCES

An extensive survey of the contemporary sources has already been made in the first two volumes of our study. They provide a lot of material for the reconstruction of political history of medieval India *albeit* the contemporary writers scarcely take account of the life of the common man. What to say of the court historians and official chroniclers, even the independent and freelance writers of those days were also interested primarily in recording the affairs of the courts and exploits of the rulers or their own martial heroes and patrons among the nobility. They dealt mostly with matters which did not concern the general public; seldom did they pay attention to the socio-cultural condition or standard of living of the people at large. Further, the medieval system of education being 'theologically oriented', most of the muslim writers traced the origin of every branch of human knowledge and intellectual or cultural attainment to the *Quran* and the prophet Muhammad. In order to use their material, therefore, it is essential to have 'a clear understanding of the mentality of the men'[9] who wrote it. Even otherwise, a lot of patience is needed to go through their works to cull some material of socio-cultural import. The social content in the texts of the otherwise renowned chronicles and standard historiographical literature is much less than what we find in the works of Amir Khusrau and other general literature in Persian as well as vernacular languages. Similarly, the *janamsakhis*, religious discourses, and biographical records of the *bhakti* reformers, *tazkiras* and *malfuzat* of *sufi* saints, travelogues and accounts of the foreigners are the treasure-house of knowledge about the socio-cultural history of the times. Likewise, the monuments and other archaeological sources are of immense value to us in the reconstruction of the social life and cultural heritage of medieval India.

The Standard Chronicles and Historical Literature

The contemporary Arabic and Persian chronicles and standard historical literature provide us with some material of

socio-cultural import, the extent and utility of which is sometimes inversely proportional to their value as sources of political and military history. It may be worthwhile to make a brief reference to some useful features of those standard works which help us in understanding the social life of the people under review. *Chachnama*[10] is the first such chronicle which gives us an insight into the caste-ridden people of Sind on the eve of the arab invasions; they displayed manifold social virtues as well as divisive and self-destructive tendencies of the so-called *rajput culture*. Dahir, the ruler of Sind, gave a heroic fight to the invaders and perished with his entire family in the grim struggle for the defence of his petty state. He fell fighting in the battlefield along with thousands of his soldiers *albeit* his widowed queen Ranibai refused to surrender the stronghold of Rawar and fought the invaders to the bitter end; having exhausted all her resources in men and material, she tasted death in the true *rajput spirit* by performing *jauhar* with numerous other besieged ladies. Nevertheless, Dahir was said to be an autocrat and 'usurper' who was brahmin by caste and unpopular with his subjects, the bulk of whom happened to be *jats* and *medhs* by race and buddhists by faith. The latter were treated as outcastes and deprived of civil liberties by the *brahmin* regime; accordingly, they did not cooperate with their ruler in the defence of the state. The buddhist populace of Nerun (mod. Hyderabad, Sind) and Sehwan offered submission to the invaders without a fight. The author of *Chachnama* highlights the activities of traitors among the Indians who lacked national consciousness, and, because of their own weaknesses, caste prejudices or self-interest, betrayed their ruler and brought about the fail of their state. According to *Chachnama*, when Debal, the seaport of Sind, was under attack by the arabs, 'the buddhist priests of Nerun entered into a treasonable correspondence' with Hajjaj, the arab governor of Iraq, who had despatched the army of invasion to Sind. After the fall of Debal, they 'openly helped' Qasim 'with provisions'. At Sehwan also, 'the buddhist fifth-columnists welcomed the arabs and entered into a pact with them against their own governor, who was defeated, and he fled'.[11] As a rejoinder, one of the modern critics tells us that 'all the buddhists did not support' the arab invaders and some actually offered resistance to them. On the other hand, many non-buddhists were also guilty of treacherous conduct towards their king and the state. On the eve of the fateful battle between Qasim and Dahir, near the fort of Rawar, a military general of Sind, named Mokah 'basely deserted Dahir and promised to supply Muhammad (bin Qasim) with boats for crossing the *Sindhu*, on receiving as reward a large stretch of the conquered territory'. When Qasim 'crossed to the eastern bank of the Sindhu, he was joined by the brother of Mokah, who had already betrayed Dahir. By the help and advice of these two chiefs, Qasim scored a victory over Dahir'.[12] This is how the pre-muslim Indian society of early *rajput period* conducted itself in the face of common danger from abroad. From Debal to Delhi, and from Dahir to

Prithvi Raj Chauhan in the twelfth century, the *rajput society and culture* flourished in India with its well-recognised virtues and vices; the evidence provided by *Chachnama* is fully corroborated by *Prithviraja Raso*[13] of Chand Bardai.

Alberuni, the celebrated author of *Tarikh ul Hind*,[14] was the first prominent muslim indologist who accompanied the invading hordes of Mahmud of Ghazni to the Indo-Gangetic valley, sometime in 1018-19, as freelance writer. While the invaders fought battles and indulged in loot and plunder, Alberuni just wandered about as a forlorn individual, in deep anguish and disgust; he simply observed the wanton destruction of Indian towns and temples, and the grievous injuries inflicted by the turks upon the Indians in the satisfaction of their greed for wealth and material assets. Alberuni travelled extensively in various parts of the war-torn country, studied the language, religion and philosophy of the hindus[15], and wrote the classic account of their social and cultural life. His book, *Tarikh ul Hind*, is an authentic primary source of information about the socio-religious condition of India of Mahmud of Ghazni's times. It gives a scholarly analysis of the social and religious institutions of the Hindus and throws light on their rich cultural heritage, including science and literature. It gives a dispassionate analysis of the weaknesses of the Indian character and the shortcoming of their socio-political order which led to their defeat and humiliation at the hands of the invaders. Alberuni made extensive use of the Sanskrit literature from which he quotes chapter and verse in support of his contentions. He died in Ghazni at the age of seventy-seven in 1048 A.D.

Hasan Nizami, an immigrant from Khurasan, took up service under Qutubuddin Aibek, the then viceroy of northern India on behalf of Muhammad Ghori, and commenced the writing of his book, *Taj ul Ma'asir*[16] 'The Crown of Exploits', on the orders of his patron; it records the military exploits of Muhammad Ghori and the beginning of the Turkish rule in India from 1191-92 to 1217. It is a marvellous production in more than one respect; it is the first historical narrative which untags the history of the sultanate of Delhi from that of Ghazni, Central Asia or Islam, the usual starting points of many other contemporary chronicles. Its medium of expression is a unique mixture of Arabic and Persian languages, in poetry as well as prose. The author starts in Arabic and, all of a sudden, switches over to Persian while giving details of certain events, and again reverts to Arabic at his convenience: a learned scholar and literary wizard, Hasan Nizami displays his command over both the languages; his expression is rich in vocabulary and juicy phrases. Similarly, the author was a good poet who could compose verses in both the languages with equal competence; therefore, his prose passages are interspersed with fine pieces of poetry which are of literary merit in their own right. The book comprises twelve thousand lines of which above seven thousand are in verse, both Arabic and Persian. *Taj ul Ma'asir* is rich in social content;

it throws interesting sidelights on various aspects of the sultanate in the days of its infancy. In the midst of the historical narrative, the author starts describing the celebration of functions and festivals at the court, amusements of the turkish nobility, and fantastic customs and manners of the people at large. Not only this; Hasan Nizami introduces, in the style of *Panchtantra* literature of ancient India, a subordinate series of descriptions (*sifats*) within one leading subject, which include qualities of mirrors, rules of chess, natural elements, seasons, fruits, flowers and numerous other aspects of socio-cultural import. To a man of literature, with proficiency in Arabic and Persian, the book offers interesting reading; no wonder, it was very popular in the literary circles of the sultanate.

Tabaqat i Nasiri [17] of Minhajus Siraj, though primarily a political chronicle, is found indispensable as a book of reference regarding the religious, educational and, to some extent, cultural developments of his times. It throws light on the nature and character of the muslim aristocracy, civil administration and organisation of the court of the sultans with special reference to the part played therein by the turkish nobility and the *ulama*. Minhajus Siraj himself belonged to an aristocratic family of central Asia; he was related from his mother's side to the ruling house of sultan Mahmud of Ghazni while his father was attached to the 'army of Hindustan' under Muhammad Ghori as *qazi* and spiritual guide. Minhajus Siraj was a distinguished scholar of Islamic theology (*manqul*) and jurisprudence (*fiqh*); he received appointment as principal of the *Firozi madrassah* at Uchh in 1227 from Nasiruddin Qabacha who was then in revolt against Delhi. The very next year, Uchh was recovered by Altumish who brought Minhajus Siraj to Dehli and patronised him. Minhaj was the principal of the *Nasiria madrassah*, and he also held the exalted offices of the chief *qazi* and *Sdra i jahan* under sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud (1246-66); he enjoyed the confidence of the sultan as well as his *malik naib* Balban. Being a part and parcel of the establishment, his references to the educational system, judicial organisation, turkish nobility and state politics bear a mark of authenticity and accuracy. Of course, K. A. Nizami is correct in his observation that Minhajus Siraj. "is truthful in so far as the actual details of incidents, he has recorded, are concerned but, in his analysis of causes and circumstances, he has been carried away by his prejudices. His evaluation of the characters and activities of Imaduddin in Raihan and Nur Turk is coloured and prejudiced for the simple reason that both represented forces which were arrayed against his collaborators in the religious and political spheres. Imaduddin Raihan wanted the Turkish monopoly of power and Minhaj's interests were clearly linked up with the interests of the Turkish oligarchy; Nur Turk was critical of the materialistic pursuits and mundane ambitions of the *ulama* and

Minhaj was actually wallowing in it. Minhaj's account of all men and movements, where such tensions are invoived, should be read with a grain of salt."[18]

Nevertheless, Minhajus Siraj was a very knowledgeable person who did a lot of labour in collecting the material from all the available sources and devoted many years in hammering his monumental work in shape. Book (*majilad*) XXII of the *Tabaqat i Nasiri* contains the biographical sketches of the eminent courtiers, military generals, provincial governors and other men of repute of the sultanate period from 1227 to 1259; the author often quotes or refers to the authority for the facts given by him in his narrative.

Ziauddin Barani (b. 1285 A.D.), the celebrated author of *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi* [19] and *Fatawa i Jahandari* [20], has been rated the greatest of all the contemporary historians of early medieval India. Like Minhajus Siraj, he also belonged to an aristocratic family of the earliest turkish immigrants to India, and was brought up in Delhi in an affluent environment and highly aristocratic traditions of the day. He joined the royal court under Muhammad bin Tughluq and enjoyed his patronage for seventeen long years. The sultan held him in high esteems as an intellectual. Barani was a close associate of Amir Khusrau and rubbed shoulders with the highest of the nobility in the sultanate; he was extremely conscious of his superior social status. His book *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi* preserves the history of the sultanate for full one century, from 1259 to 1359. The author started his work just where Minhaj had left it; his narrative is thus a continuation of the *Tabaqat i Nasiri*. Barani's write-up, excluding the account of Firoze Tughluq constitutes a standard work of history which establishes his reputation as premier historian of his age, the master of his craft who surpasses even Minhajus Siraj whom he declares to be his torch-bearer in the pursuit of this discipline.

Barani's description of Muhammad bin Tughluq's reign is 'unfair'; he distorted the facts 'deliberately' and wrote with a biased mind. Similarly, his narrative of Firoze Tughluq's reign was prepared under duress; having been disgraced by the royal court and dubbed an enemy of the reigning monarch[21] by his rivals, Barani set aside his duties as a historian and, instead, resorted to the flattery of the sultan in order to pacify his wrath. The title of his work, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi* is, in fact, a misnomer; Barani's true worth as a scientific historian is known not by what he writes about Muhammad bin Tughluq or Firoze Tughluq but the preceding sultans.

Barani's account is not descriptive but analytical and critical; he does not bother about the details; instead, he takes up the political and administrative issues as 'a compact whole' and, through a method of scientific presentation, reveals the characteristics of the period to which they belong. Even his minor comments on the

characters and cryptic references to the events throw a flood of light on the working of the minds of the rulers, and prides and prejudices of the age. In spite of his subjective approach, which involved his religious outlook, class consciousness, aristocratic complexion and his subsequent personal discomfiture, Barani reveals the true historian in him, and those who understand his personal shortcomings can evaluate his work much better.[22]

Barani's *Fatawa i Jahandari* is a complementary volume to the *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*. In this book, the author recapitulates and further elaborates the political philosophy of the sultanate on the basis of his earlier narrative. He explains in historical perspective how the original Islamic theory of kingship and the foreign political institutions, adopted by the turkish rulers of Delhi, underwent radical changes in the Indian setting over the passage of two centuries. The book deals with subjects like powers and functions of the crown, privileges of the nobility, the doctrine of safety of the state, law and order problems, crime and punishment, religion and politics, the role of the army and the intelligence services of the sultans.

Yet another famous historian of the Tughluq period, Shamsi Siraj Afif, has also left a standard work, entitled, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi* which is devoted exclusively to the reign of Firoze Tughluq and constitutes the most accurate and authentic contemporary account of his times. The book was written by Afif long after the death of the sultan when Delhi had been invaded and put to plunder by Amir Timur. Afif wrote, in the true spirit of a historian and biographer, the reminiscences of the glorious past, for the edification and benefit of the posterity, without any self-interest, prejudice or reflexes. In compact and well-written ninety chapters of the book, the author gives, in a simple and matter-of fact narrative not only the political and military activities of Firoze Tughluq but also his administrative policy with special reference to the public welfare activities. From the study of this book we get the impression that Firoze Tughluq was really the forerunner of Sher Shah Suri and Akbar in the matter of utilising state resources for the public good. The book is unique in the sense that it also describes the life and condition of the people at large, the one aspect which has usually been ignored by contemporary writers. According to Elliot, this work 'gives us altogether a better view of the internal condition of India under a Mohammadan sovereign than is presented to us in any other work, except the *Ain i Akbari*.'[24]

Sultan Firoze Tughluq has left a brochure of thirty-two pages in autobiographical writing called *Futuhat i Firoze Shahi;*[25] besides its military contents, it shows the true working of his mind in handling the state affairs. The book 'exhibits the humane and generous spirit' of Firoze Tughluq 'in a pleasing tone'; it explains the concept of his kingly duties which was based on religious, humanitarian and moral obligations.

The *memoirs* of Amir Timur (1334-1405), entitled *Tuzuk i Timuri* or *Maljuzat i Timuri*[26], are now recognised as authentic work of that 'blood-thirsty monster' who took Delhi by storm in 1398-99. He not only gave a death-blow to the tottering Tughluq dynasty but also, with a single stroke, undid the work done by the turkish rulers of Delhi in bringing about social stability over the past two centuries. The crude facts relating to his destructive activities are given in his autobiography by Timur without any attempt to hide his barbarous character or real motives. A few references to the Indian social life found in the *Tuzuk i Timuri* are born out by *Zafarnama*[27] of Maulana Yazdi, a courtier of the Timuri house, who wrote an account of his military exploits in 1424.

Tarikh i Mubarak Shahi [28] of Yahva bin Ahmad Sirhindi is the only contemporary source, discovered so far, on the history of the Sayyad dynasty (1414-51). The book begins with the rise of the Ghori dynasty and the conquest of northern India by the turks; and the story comes to an end abruptly in 1434-35 when Sayyad Muhammad was on the throne. The author was 'a careful and apparently an honest chronicler'; like a typical medieval Indian writer, he visualises the divine will in shaping the fortunes of Islam in India and ends the account of each ruler with the phrase 'God alone knows the truth'. *Tarikh i Mubarak Shahi* was consulted and duly acknowledged by the historiographers of the *mughal period*, including Nizamuddin Ahmad, Badauni and Firishta.

Khwaja Abdullah Malik Isami (b. 1311 A.D), a scholar and poet of the fourteenth century, wrote an historical *masnavi*, *Futuhus Salatin*[29] in 1349-50 on the turkish rule in India, from the Ghaznavids to Muhammad bin Tughluq. He belonged to an aristocratic family of turkish immigrants who had long associations with the earliest sultans of Delhi. Isami was about sixteen years old when he migrated to Daulatabad during the reign of Muhammad bin Tughluq. He was an eternal bachelor who is said to have suffered considerable hardships in Deccan and lived a wretched and lonely life when Alauddin Hasan, the founder of the Bahmani kingdom, extended his patronage to him. The author, in his scholarly work, gives in outline the history of the sultans of Delhi and proceeds to explain in detail the circumstances which led to the foundation of the Bahmani kingdom. Isami's approach to Muhammad bin Tughluq is highly subjective; he has painted the sultan in the darkest shade as 'the wisest fool' of the Islamic world; nevertheless, his book reveals, in ample measure, the valuable contributions made by the unlucky sultan towards the consolidation of the muslim hold and spread of Islamic culture in the south. The book is full of anecdotes which throw a flood of light on the social, religious and cultural life of the period. Isami talks of the presence of Chinese traders in Delhi during the reign of Altumish and makes frequent references to the economic condition of the people.

Indian historiography, which has been recognised as 'an Islamic heritage', reached the zenith of its growth and development during the *mughal period*. The imperial mughals were educated and well-cultured princes almost all of whom possessed refined literary taste. Irrespective of whether they were themselves fond of reading and writing or not, they possessed insatiable hunger for books. The mughal emperors were great patrons of education and learning. Their period of rule witnessed almost a renaissance in the fields of ancient and medieval learning, brought about by the scholars of all races, religious communities and linguistic groups, who flourished hand in glove with one another and enjoyed the royal patronage without discrimination. Persian as the court language prospered by leaps and and bounds during the mughal period; the bureaucracy as well as the Indian *elite*—hindus and muslims alike, cherished it as the language of opportunity. The period was marked for the development of Urdu, Hindi and regional languages and witnessed a revival of Sanskrit language and literature, *albeit* the use of Arabic was confined to the production of Islamic treatises and scriptures only. The greatest literary-cum-intellectual achievement of the mughal era can be said to be the replacement of religious bias by secular attitude among the men of letters and their patrons.

Babar, the founder of the mughal rule in India, occupies a place of pride among the contemporary writers to whom we are heavily indebted for our knowledge of the political, social and cultural condition of the country in the first quarter of the sixteenth century. His autobiography, variously styled as the *Tuzuk i Baburi*, *Waqiat i Baburi* or simply *Babarnama*,[30] constitutes a first-rate authority not only on his own career but also on the socio-cultural history of his times; his *description of Hindustan* has been recapitulated at its appropriate place in the foregoing pages of this study.

Tarikh i Rashidi[31] of Mirza Haider Dughlat is the second most important and invaluable source of our information, after *Babarnama*, about the rise of the mughal power in India under Babar and its subsequent eclipse during the period of Humayun. It throws interesting side-lights on the social and cultural traits of the people of Kashmir. Gulbadan Begam, a daughter of Babar and half-sister of Humayun, recorded her reminiscences in the form of a book, entitled, *Humayun Namah*.[32] on the request of Akbar. Written in colloquial Persian, mixed up with Turki words and phrases, the book is not of much value as a political history *albeit* it gives a refreshing account of Humayun's household and character. 'A woman to the core', Gulbadan 'cares more for marriages and the gaity of social life in the royal seraglio'[33] than about the decisive events of Humayun's career. Her detailed account of Babar's family shows the culture and refinement of men and women of the Timurids and gives a glimpse of the royal etiquette that prevailed at the mughal court. The manner in which Gulbadan describes her brother

Hindal's marriage brings vividly before the mind the social customs and usages of the mughal aristocracy of medieval India.

Khwand Amir or Khondamir[34] was a famous scholar from Khurasan who migrated to India and received patronage from Babar soon after his conquest of Delhi and Agra. Khondamir is credited with the production of a number of standard works on history and politics, including *Khulasat ul Akhbar*, *Habibus-Siyar* and *Dastur ul Wuzara*. After the death of Babar, Khwand Amir was attached to the court of Humayun for whom he wrote a treatise, entitled *Qanun i Humayuni*.[35] It describes the buildings erected by Humayun and the administrative innovations introduced by him during the early years of his reign; the latters give the readers an idea of 'the bizarre character' of Humayun. Khwand Amir gives an eye-witness account of the court festivities and social dealings of the mughal nobility between themselves. The *Tarikh i Humayuni*[36] of Jauhar Aftabchi, though not a scholarly work, portrays a life-like picture of Humayun's personality and character and makes most intimate references to the harem life of the mughals; it constitutes an important treatise on the socio-cultural upbringing of the Timurids.

Abbas Khan Sarwani, Ahmad Yadgar, Abdullah and Niamat-ullab, the chroniclers of the *afghan* rulers—*lodis, and surs*; have provided much more useful socio-cultural background to their political narratives than any other class of historians. Abbas Khan Sarwani was a distant relation of Sher Shah Sur; he held a petty *mansab* of 500 under Akbar. A man of some literary taste, he agreed to write an account of the most adventurous and successful among his kinsmen, viz; Sher Shah Sur, 'whose craft and valour had won him a crown'. The book, entitled, *Tarikh i Sher Shah*[37], is not a history but a sort of autobiography of the author in which the characters are made to speak for themselves. Abbas possessed first-hand knowledge of the character and administrative achievements of Sher Shah which he has tried to portray faithfully through the pages of his book. His work is like a screen on which the Indo-Muslim society of early mughal period not only shows but also speaks for itself. Ahmad Yadgar, the author of *Tarikh i Salatin i Afghana* or the *Tarikh i Shahi*[38], was 'a servant' of the *sur* kings *albeit* his father was *wazir* to Mirza Askari, Babar's third son, in the Gujarat campaign in 1535-36. The book is said to have been undertaken by Ahmad Yadgar under the patronage of Daud Shah, the last prince of the afghan race in India, who was beheaded by the orders of Khan i Khana in 1575; it was completed, however, under the direction of Akbar in 1601. It reveals the social background of the afghan princes and the economic hardships faced by them in their struggle against the mughals for the re-establishment of their political ascendancy in Hindustan. Abdullah of Koil (Aligarh) wrote *Tarikh i Daudi*[39] in the time of the emperor Jahangir. It contains some interesting stories and anecdotes of the afghan princes and gives an insight into the social organisation,

intellectual calibre and moral character of the afghan community of the Indian *mussalmans*. About the discipline of history, the author writes:

> "History is not simply information regarding the affairs of kings who have passed away; it is a science which expands the intellect and furnishes the wise with examples."[40]

Khawaja Niamatullah Harawi complied *Tarikh i Khan Jahani*[41] in 1613 at Burhanpur during the reign of Jahangir. The author was assisted in the preparation of his book by Haibat Khan of Samana; one of the subordinates of Khan Jahan Lodhi. It gives a genealogical record of the various afghan tribes with special reference to the *lodis* and the *surs* who gained ascendancy in medieval India. The concluding part of the book contains invaluable memoirs of as many as sixty-eight afghan scholars and saints.

Akbar, the founder of a secular nation-state in India, carved out a unique place for himself in the annals of the country's history and culture. He was an institution by himself; no wonder, during his very life-time, he had become a subject of serious study with his contemporary historians and men of letters—Indians and foreigners alike. The contemporary writers have presented the character and achievements of that great monarch in widely different colours; three schools of thought can clearly be discerned in this respect. Abul Fazl, the court historian of Akbar, belonged to that category of scholars who wrote about him 'in a spirit of eulogising everything about him'.[42] Badaoni who bore personal grudge and prejudices against Akbar and his two primary counsellors, Abul Fazl and Faizi, went to the other extreme in denouncing the emperor as a hypocrite and enemy of Islam, unworthy of holding the exalted office of the *amir ul momnin* Nazamuddin Ahmad, the author of the *Tabaqat i Akbari*[43], connoted the middle path; he represented a galaxy of sober and serious historians who attempted to give an objective and dispassionate account of the character and achievements of Akbar and the *grandees* of the empire. Nevertheless, all the three schools of thought have, in their own characteristic ways, helped us in making a well-balanced assessment of the multidimensional achievements of Akbar and his times.

The *Akbarnama* of Abul Fazl constitutes the main source of our knowledge about the history of Akbar and his times; its contents have been culled by the author from a huge mass of material, official as well as non-official, not to be found in any other single source. The *Akbarnama* is a monumental work in three volumes;[44] its first volume contains an account of Akbar's ancestors, including that of Babar and Humayun, while the second one is devoted exclusively to the exhaustive treatment of Akbar's reign in chronological order. The third volume of the *Akbarnama* has been given

a sub-title, the *Ain i Akbari*; it was prepared simultaneously with the first two volumes, and is practically a separate work, complete in itself.[45] By bringing this comprehensive work within the purview of history, Abul Fazl widened the range and scope of the discipline much beyond the comprehension of other medieval historiographers. He interpreted history in terms of national advancement which took a note of the political, administrative, economic and cultural realities of the period. The *Ain i Akbari* is not merely a descriptive and statistical survey of the mughal empire; it throws a flood of light on the administrative system and the state policy of the imperial mughals. Through its pages is revealed the inner working of the mughal bureaucracy, the steel-frame of the empire, which helped Akbar in transforming his territorial possessions into a mighty nation-state of medieval India. After Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, the *Ain i Akbari* is the second greatest work of historical significance produced by an Indian, the like of which is hard to find even in the annals of European historical literature.

Abul Fazl introduced an intellectual element in the field of historiography; he adopted a rational and secular approach to the subject, and while reconstructing the contemporary history of Akbar's time, made an appeal to reason as against religious bigotry, cultural traditionalism or orthodoxy and prejudice. To him the history of India did not consist in the conflict between Hinduism and Islam but rather between the forces of nationalism and regionalism, secularism and religious fanaticism, stability and disintegration. Considered from these points of view, Abul Fazl stands unsurpassed amongst all the historiographers of his age.

Besides the above-mentioned standard works of Abul Fazl, the collection of his letters, entitled the *Ruqat i Abul Fazl*,[46] also constitutes one of the authentic and useful sources of information regarding the socio-cultural history of Akbar's times. These letters were written by Abul Fazl, off and on, to the emperor Akbar, members of the royal family, including princes, queens and other notables of *harem* and the bureaucracy. Similarly, the *Insha i Abul Fazl*, or the *Maktubat i Allami*,[47] comprises a collection of official despatches prepared by the learned prime minister in his official capacity. The compilation is divided into three parts; part one incorporates the letters and *firmans* prepared by Abul Fazl and sent on behalf of the emperor to the nobles and foreign dignitaries, including Shah Abbas of Persia, Abdullah Khan Uzbeg of Turan, the king of Kashghar and the *sheikhs* of Mecca. The second part contains a collection of Abul Fazl s petitions and representations made to the emperor very often on matters of state policy and issues of national importance, as well as the letters written by him to his colleagues. The third part of the *Maktubat i Allami* consists of Abul Fazl's write ups on general and miscellaneous subjects as well as the comments on his own literary and historical compositions. Being a man of literary taste, he possessed

an inborn urge to write and, through these writings, Abul Fazl actually seems to have set the models in Persian prose style.

Mulla Abdul Qadir *ibn* Mulukshah of Badaon (mod. U.P.) was born at Todah, near Fatehpur Sikri in c. 1541; he, however, became popular as Al-Badaoni or simply Badaoni and was poeti cally styled (*takhlus*) Qadiri. He was a great scholar of Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit, well-versed in the subjects of Islamic theology, astronomy and history; he was also a born singer and poet. Badaoni and Abul Fazl came into contact with the emperor Akbar and received favours from him almost simultaneously. Badaoni received appointment as *imam* of the royal court for Wednesdays and was frequently employed by Akbar to make translations from Arabic and Sanskrit into Persian. His first major scholarly assignment was to translate the *Ramayana* into Persian verse; he accomplished this task after having put in an arduous labour of four years and was richly rewarded by the emperor.[48] Thereafter, Badaoni was asked to translate the *Mahabharata* into Persian but he left the work half-done. Meanwhile, Abul Fazl and Faizi rose into prominence at the imperial court and excited the jealousies of Badaoni who dubbed them as 'shameless flatterers', 'intriguers' and 'yesmen' of the emperor. Being an orthodox *sunni*, Badaoni disliked Akbar's religious outlook and his liberal state policy based on secular notions; he, therefore, lost in the estimation of his royal patron and stopped attending the court.

Badaoni's *Muntakhab ut Tawarikh* is a comprehensive history of the muslim rule in India from the Ghaznavids to the fortieth year of Akbar's reign. The original manuscript was in two parts; the first half comprised a general history of muslim India from Subuktagin to Humayun's death while the second one gave an exhaustive account of Akbar's reign and a *tazkirah*, devoted to the biographies of the poets, saints, and men of learning who adorned the court of Akbar. The *tazkirah*, which gave the biographical sketches and works of thirtyeight *sheikhs* (religious leaders), sixty-nine scholars, fifteen philosophers and physicians and one hundred and sixty-seven poets, was separated from the historical narrative of the second half of Badaoni's book by the editors and translators of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, thus converting the *Muntakhab ut Tawarikh* into three volumes[49]. It belongs to the category of 'memoirs rather than histories' and is highly subjective in 'its bitter criticism of Akbar's favourites and his reforms, as deriving from fanaticism, ingratitude or sheer perversity';[50] nevertheless, it is a great asset to the historical literature of the times, in no way less useful than the *Akbarnama* of Abul Fazl. Badaoni is very much original in his approach to the subject; he elaborates and reinterprets even the old and well-known facts in highly intellectual and refreshing overtones. A 'freelance' writer, Badoni 'wears no garb or disguise', owes no obligations to any one, and 'writes whatever he feels like writing'[51]. He has adopted 'a general tone of censure

and disparagement for Akbar', *albeit* his book conveys a much more favourable impression of the character and achievements of that great monarch than the 'rhetorical flourishes' of Abul Fazl. In the words of M. Mujeeb,

> "...here is someone who enjoys looking at life from all sides, who writes with relish and writes well, who has not searched for facts that were obscure or had escaped the notice of others but has given us some thing live and vibrant, reflecting him and his age".[52]

Among the other chronicles of Akbar's reign, mention may be made of the *Tarikh i Akbar Shahi* of Muhammad Arif Qandahari which gives an accurate picture of the mughal administration; the description of land revenue system of Raja Todar Mal, being based on the personal observations of the author, is very exhaustive and most informative regarding the life and conditions of the Indian peasantry. The *Gulshan i Ibrahimi*[53], popularly known as the *Tarikh i Firishta*, of Muhammad Qasim Hindushah *alias* Firishta, is a general history of the muslim rule in India upto the accession of Jahangir. Though a secondary work, based on the renowned chronicles of Akbar's reign, the compilation of Firishta provides information regarding many developments of the times which have received scant treatment by the other writers. Bayazid Biyat in his book, entitled, *Tazkira i Humayun wa Akbar*,[54] throws light on some aspects of public welfare activities of Akbar's government and gives long lists of nobles in attendance upon Humayun at certain crucial occasions. The *Tarikh i Khandan i Taimuria*[55], by an anonymous writer, being profusely illustrated, is a document of rare artistic beauty which gives a glimpse of the socio-cultural life of the mughal period. The *Tarikh i Haqqi*[56], prepared in 1596-97 by Abdul Haq Dehlavi, gives a bitter criticism of Akbar's religious policy. The *Muntakhab ut Tawarikh* of Yahiya bin Abdul Latif[57], gives a valuable account of the mughal rule in India: it makes useful references to the social condition and material prosperity of the mughal subjects. The *Tarikh i Alfi*[58] or 'the history of the muslim world upto the thousandth year of the Hijra era' was compiled by Maulana Ahmad and others, including Badaoni, at Akbar's orders, in conformity with the general notion that Islam would come to an end after a thousand years of its birth; *alf* implies 'one thousand' in the Arabic language. The *Dabistan i Mazahib*[59], written by Mohsin Fani, sometime after the death of Akbar, throws interesting light on the religious discourses held by the emperor in the *Ibadat Khana* at Fatehpur Sikri, and explains the fundamentals of the *Din i Ilahi.*

The autobiography of the emperor Jahangir, entitled *Tuzuk i Jahangiri*[60] , is by far the most compact and comprehensive record, in chronological order, of the political and socio-cultural developments of his reign for the first eighteen years. Apart from the political and military events, it reproduces the imperial *firmans*, orders

and regulations issued by the mughal government time to time to stream-line the state machinery. The book throws a flood of light on the character and calibre of the nobility, the functioning of the court and the relationships between the emperor and his officers. It describes the economic condition of the country in general, refers to the material prosperity of the empire, all the same taking note of the occasional famines and the epidemics which resulted in the loss of life and caused hardships to the subjects. Muhammad Sharif Motamad Khan, who gave a helping hand to Jahangir in recording his memoirs, was a military officer with some literary taste; his compilation, entitled the *Iqbalnama*[61], is a general history of the mughal rule in India upto 1628; among other things, it recapitulates the achievements of the imperial mughals in the domain of social and material advancement.

The mughal empire touched the pinnacle of its glory during the reign of Shah Jahan. His period abounds in the availability of many a standard work on the life-history of the emperor besides the rich treasure of official documents and records which help us in reconstructing the socio-cultural achievements of his reign. Three different chronicles, each entitled the *Padishahnama*, and written by Muhammad Amin Qazwini[62], Abdul Hamid Lahauri[63], and Muhammad Waris[64] respectively, give us a very impressive record of the glories of Shah Jahan's reign in the socio-cultural fields; the narrative of Waris details an exceptionally picturesque account of the magnificent buildings of Shah Jahan. Muhammad Salih, who worked in the imperial records department, made use of the official biographies and government records to re-write, in his own ornate language, the detailed account of Shah Jahan's achievements in four volumes; it is entitled *Amal i Salih*.[65] Towards the end of the book, the author gives valuable biographical sketches of the holy men, scholars, poets, calligraphists and physicians of Shah Jahan's period.

Half a century of Aurangzeb's rule (1658-1707) forms the most complex and crucial period of medieval Indian history because of its political implications on the fortunes of the mughal empire and fate of the people who fell into his charge. It was a very eventful and spectacular age both in its achievements as well as failures; it provided such a huge wealth of material for the contemporary chroniclers that, given the liberty as they had under Akbar, they could have produced the richest and the most prodigious mass of historical literature ever known before. The monarch, like the legendary Hercules, had started shaking the subcontinent from its very roots, and, while he did so, he did not want to be embarrassed by the chroniclers or poets, flatterers or critical observers among the scholars. The first and the last court historiographer of his reign, Mirza Muhammad Kazim, produced the chronicle of the contemporary events covering the first decade of Aurangzeb's reign, under the title, *Alamgirnama*[66]. The book was prepared to order and revised by the emperor himself. Written in 'verbose' and

'tedious style', it is 'full of gross flattery and suppression of all incidents discreditable to Aurangzeb'[67]. Nevertheless, the emperor stopped the work, and in the twenty-first year of his reign the writing of contemporary history was forbidden altogether throughout the length and breadth of the empire. In spite of this official ban, a brilliant historian, Muhammad Hashim *alais* Khafi Khan, continued to write secretly (khufia taur par) and objectively the contemporary history which covered all the aspects of Aurangzeb's activities till his death, including the after-effects of his reactionary state policies. His work, entitled *Muntakhab ul Lubab*[68], constitutes by far the most objective and complete history of the imperial mughals from Babar to the fourteenth year of Muhammad Shah's reign (1733 A.D.). In the words of Jadunath Sarkar, Khafi Khan's 'reflective style, description of the condition of society, and characteristic anecdotes save his work from the dry formality of the court annals, and he is specially informing with regard to the Deccan affairs'[69]. During the concluding years of Aurangzeb's reign, when he was badly caught in the whirlwind of revolts and disorders of his own creation, there was a spurt in historical writings throughout the country The contemporary sources of our information about the political as well as socio-cultural history of the times are so numerous that even the casual mention of their titles here does not seem to be advisable for want of space. To mention but a few, the *Nuskha i Dilkusha*[70] of Bhim Sen is especially useful as the primary source of our information regarding the affairs of the Deccan. Similarly, the *Futuhat i Dilkusha*[71] of Mehta Isar Dass is a first-hand authority for much of what happened in Rajputana and Malwa between 1657-98. The *Tarikh i Iradat Khan*[72] is a good history of the mughal empire from the close of Aurangzeb's reign to that of Farrukh Siyyar; the author gives an eye-witness account of many important developments in simple and straightforward language. Similarly, the *Ibratnama*[73] of Muhammad Kasim is a well-written chronicle on the aftermath of Aurangzeb's reactionary state policies. The two books bearing the same title, *Tarikh i Chaghatai*, the one written by Muhammad Hadi[74] and the other by Muhammad Shafi Teherani, give a general survey of the mughal rule in India from Babar to the sack of Delhi by Nadir Shah in 1739; Muhammad Shafi concludes his work with an interesting observation that, after the departure of Nadir Shah, the phantom mughal emperor Muhammad Shah *Rangila* issued a *firman* to the following effect:

"All public officers should occupy themselves in the discharge of their ordinary duties, except the historians. They should refrain from recording the events of my reign for, at present, the record cannot be a pleasant one. The reigns of Imperial (or Supreme) Government have fallen from my hands. I am now the viceroy of Nadir Shah."[75]

Works of Amir Khusrau

Amir Khusrau (c. 1252-1325) was not a professional historian nor did he claim to be one, *albeit* he has to his credit a prose chronicle, entitled *Khazainul Futuh*, and five historical *masnavis* (poetic compositions)—*Qiranus Sa'adain*, *Miftahul Futuh*, *Dewal Rani Khizr Khani*, *Nuh Sipihr*, and *Tughluq Nama*. A born poet and genius as a writer, Amir Khusrau was the first and by far the most prominent 'representative of Indo-Muslim culture'[76] of early medieval India. An account of his life-history and literary achievements has been given at an appropriate place in the chapter on 'development of education and learning' in this volume; here suffice it say that he adorned the courts of all the sultans from Balban to Ghiasuddin Tughluq as the poet laureate and was popularly known as *Tuti e Hind*—'the parrot of India'. According to an estimate, he composed four lakhs of couplets in Persian and Dehlvi or Hindavi (later Urdu) language and is said to have written as many as ninety-two independent works which included, besides the above-mentioned historical literature, five *khamsa* or *masnavis* of fictional romance, five *divans* or collections of poems, about a dozen novels, four collections of Sheikh Nizamuddin's *sufi* philosophy and sayings, besides numerous treatises in prose as well as poetry of theology, philosophy, art, literary criticism and various cultural themes. He was the first muslim poet who made liberal use of Hindi words and adopted Indian poetic imagery and themes. His literary works, therefore, comprise a rich treasure-trove of knowledge and wisdom about the socio-cultural life of the age to which he belonged, and have extensively been referred to in the course of deliberations of the subject in this study.

Khazainul Futuh[77] or *Tarikh i Ilahi* is an historiographical composition in prose which describes the conquests and other achievements of Allauddin Khalji from 1295-96 to 1311. His military campaigns in Deccan have been given in detail. The description of Mongol invasions on India and the strong policy adopted by Alauddin to combat them, being based on first-hand knowledge, is of great historical value; *Khazainul Futuh* is the only contemporary chronicle of the period and therein the facts have been narrated by the author with reasonable accuracy. *Qiran us Sa'adain*[78] of Amir Khusrau is an historical *masnavi* which gives an eye-witness account of the meeting that took place in Oudh between sultan Kaiqubad and his father Bughra Khan, the governor of Bengal; the poet laureate had accompanied the young sultan's entourage. It throws a flood of light on the political condition, the court atmosphere and the socio-cultural life of the period. *Miftahul Futuh*[79] contains an account of the military campaigns of Jalaluddin Khalji in poetry, while the *masnavi*, entitled *Ashiqa* or *Dewal Rani Khizr Khani*[80] narrates the romantic story of Khizr Khan, son of Alauddin Khalji, and Dewal Rani, the daughter of Rana Karan of Gujarat; it also makes a brief reference to the military expeditions of Alauddin

Khalji. Similarly, the poetic composition of *Nuh Sipihr*[81] deals with the reign of Mubarak Shah Khalji, the unworthy and incompetent successor of Alauddin Khalji. *Tughluq Nama*,[82] also an historical *masnavi*, was composed by Amir Khusrau to commemorate the victory of Ghiasuddin Tughluq over Khusrau Khan (1320 AD..), leading to the establishment of a new ruling dynasty. It is a valuable primary source of history for the reign of Ghiasuddin Tughluq. These works were prepared by Amir Khusrau either under the direction of the reigning monarchs or for presentation to them. His 'primary concern' in their composition was 'to demonstrate his literary ability and gain a lasting reputation, as also to get reward for his literary performances'.[83] Obviously, they present only the bright side of the picture; the writer applauds the achievements of his patrons in hyperbolic terms and glosses over their shortcomings and failures. The works suffer generally from factual and topographical errors and show lack of chronological sequence. The author gives fanciful account of some very insignificant happenings by implyings verbose style, poetic imageries and literary art forms. Amir Khusrau cannot be called 'a deliberate liar' *albeit* he 'omitted what he did not want to express',[84] he does not distort the facts as was done by Barani in the case of Muhammad bin Tughluq.

The above-mentioned shortcomings noticed in the so-called historiographical works of Amir Khusrau are more than made up in his literary attainments. In fact, the social content in his historiographical as well as other literary works is so great that it elevates Amir Khusrau to an unsurpassed position in the annals of medieval Indian history as an historian of socio-cultural life of his age. According to an opinion,

> "As a high-brow artist or chronicler, Khusrau could have confined himself to courtly environment and association with a few cultured men of letters; even as a social historian, he could have written with the detachment of an academician like Abul Fazl. But Khusrau came from the people and feels at his best only when he moves among the crowd. When behaving as a courtier or as a man of letters, he is conscious of playing a part: his ascetic and puritan moods are decidedly morbid and only temporary, and he avails himself of the first opportunity to throw away these masks and morbid gloom and to start laughing and pleasing himself like other people. Nay, to assure the crowd that no amount of intellectual attainments and secular elevation can stop him from being congenial to them, he even borrows sometimes the vulgarity of the undeveloped mind, and the unrefined taste of the illiterate. When he is among common people he takes a detached view of his previous stately environments and spiritual heights and gives an honest and frank opinion about men and things, not excluding himself."[85]

These are the qualities which render Amir Khusrau's literary works, as a class, to be a special source of socio-cultural history of early medieval period. For instance, *Nuh Sipihr*, one of Amir Khusrau's historical *masnavis*, is not mere chronicle of Mubarak Shah Khalji's reign; it is rather 'a unique poetical work of immense literary value' which gives vent to his feelings on Indian nationalism; it reveals his character and personality as a great nationalist who loved India, the country of his domicle, from the core of his heart. The *masnavi*, which was composed by him in 1318, at the ripe old age of sixty-five, contains an invaluable account of 'India and its people, their knowledge and learning, arts and sciences, its fauna and flora and almost all good points which make India the Paradise on earth.' In *Nuh Sipihr*, the poet expresses his intense love for India, sings songs in praise of his motherland and exerts his wits to prove India's superiority to all other countries of the world.'[86] The *masnavi* is divided into nine chapters, each dedicated to a sky or planet; thus the first chapter is dedicated to the ninth and the highest sky, second to the eighth, third to the seventh, and so on, in a descending order, hence the title *Nuh Sipihr*, viz; 'the Nine Skies'.[87] The third chapter which is dedicated to the so-called seventh sky, with Saturn (*Zuh* or *Shani*) as its presiding star, is devoted exclusiuely to the description of India and its people; therein Khusrau declares India to be a paradise on earth and gives forceful arguments in support of his contention. Likewise, one of Amir Khusrau's prose collections, entitled, *Ijaz i Khusravi*[88] is a massive compilation of diverse types of documents, personal letters and treatises written by him to his friends or masters or just to satisfy his literary and intellectual hunger. Some of these are the official documents, like the *Fathanama* of Lakhnauti, drafted by him on the orders of the sultans, which are of immense historical value; but even otherwise the contents of *Ijaz i Khusravi*, as a whole, constitute an invaluable source of study for the socio-cultural history of the times. Amir Khusrau's works are like a mirror through which we can see a very clear picture of the life and conditions of the people of Hindustan for full four decades when the Sultanate of Delhi was at the apex of its glory.

General Literature

The literary works of Amir Khusrau apart, the general literature of the age, including fiction and poetry, folklore and ballads, and the books on the life-history and teachings of *sufi* saints and *bhakti* reformers in Hindi, Urdu and the various *prakrits* or regional languages, constitutes a valuable sources of our information on the social life and condition of the people at large. The material available in this field is very rich in social content, *albeit* it exists in so many and varied vernacular languages, dialects and scripts, as to make it humanly impossible for any single student of social history to survey even a fraction of it. The author of this study, therefore, needs no apologies to record that, in this respect, he has

relied almost exclusively on the researches done already by a galaxy of national and regional scholars of socio-cultural history. Obviously, while making a select use of such material, he has exercised his discretion to re-arrange the facts and give his own interpretation of the socio-cultural phenomenon; a few of the works and the modern authorities thereon, where used, have been referred to in the body of the text.

Accounts of Foreigners

After the death of Harsha Vardhana and loss of its political unity, India, 'barring its coastal regions', was gradually cut off from the other countries. It has rightly been asserted that one of the great achievements of the turkish conquest of northern India 'was the ending of this isolation and the establishment of the international status of India in the then-known world.'[89] We possess a few invaluable travelogues of the foreigners who visited India during the early medieval period; these throw a flood of light on the political developments and socio-cultural history of the times. Ibn Battuta (c. 1304-78) occupies a premier position among the early travellers; he was an arab adventurer from Morocco who was an expert in Islamie theology and jurisprudence. He left his home in 1325 on a life-long tour of the world, and after passing through the countries of northern Africa and the Arabian peninsula, reached Sind in 1333; from there he moved on to Delhi. He was extended patronage by Muhammad bin Tughluq who appointed him the *qazi* of Delhi. He held this post for about eight years but, to his misfortune, some cases of corruption and dishonesty were brought forward against him which landed Ibn Battuta into the jail. However, he secured his release by making a personal appeal to the sultan. The latter despatched Ibn Battuta to China at the head of a diplomatic mission in 1342; on the way his party met with a shipwreck and he had to return to Delhi without completing his assignment. Thereafter, Ibn Battuta bade farewell to Delhi and moved on his sojourn again; after visiting Maldive islands and Ceylon, he returned to southern India and stayed at Madura for a shortwhile. From there he went to Mecca on a *haj* pilgrimage before his return to his homeland in 1349. Ibn Battuta received a warm reception from the ruler and the people of Morocco; by this time he had acquired a world-wide fame as philosopher and saint. He enjoyed love and reverence of his countrymen and died at the ripe old age of seventy-three.

Ibn Battuta wrote his travelogue, entitled *Kitab i Rehla*,[90] in Arabic, a part of which is devoted to his experience of the Indian life at Delhi and Madura. His book is a primary source of history of the reign of Muhammad bin Tughluq; it throws light on the socio-political condition of his times. *Kitab i Rehla* is a very valuable treatise written by a foreigner on the life and conditions of the people of Hindustan during the Tughluq period.

Abdur Razzak, the celebrated author of *Matlaus Sa'adain wa Majmaul Bahrain*[913] 'The Rising of the two Fortunate Planets (Jupiter and Venus) and the Junction of the Two Seas', was a Persian scholar. He was born at Herat in 1413; his father Jalaluddin Ishaq was a widely travelled man who held the post of *qazi* of Samarqand towards the fag-end of his life under sultan Shah Rukh of Khurasan. Abdur Razzak entered the service of the sultan after the death af his father in 1437. He was sent as an ambassador to the court of Vijayanagar; he stayed in Deccan for about two years (1442-43). He adorned the court of the sultans of Khurasan till his death in 1482; during the last ten years of his life, he was the superintendent of the *khanqah* of the late sultan Shah Rukh. Abdur Razzak spent his time in literary pursuits; the above-mentioned history of central Asia, in two volumes, is one of his contributions. In the first volume, the author gives, among other things, an account of Amir Timur's invasion of India; in the second volume, he describes the history of Timur's descendants from Shah Rukh (c. 1404) to sultan Hasan Mirza(upto 1470 A.D.); it is in this volume that he gives a detailed account of his journey to and from Vijayanagar court and its working, the personal life-style of the sovereign and his courtiers, and the socio-cultural condition of the people of Deccan in general. His travelogue is one of the primary sources of history on the cultural achievements of the Vijayanagar kingdom.

A few European travellers, who visited India during the early medieval period have also made some useful references to the land and its people in their travelogues. They include, among others, Marco Polo, Nicolo Conti, Duarte Barbosa and Domingos Paes. Marco Polo, 'the great father of modern geography',[92] was a native of Venice. He set on a sojourn of the world in the company of his father and uncle in 1271, and after passing through many countries, reached the court of Kublai Khan, the mongol emperor of China, in 1274. Marco Polo entered into the service of the great *khan* and stayed in his court for seventeen long years. Thereafter, he returned to Venice in 1294-95; on his way back, Marco Polo visited the Andaman (Angaman) islands and sailed along the eastern and western sea coasts of India. In the course of his explortions, he attempted to acquaint himself with 'the natural history' and rich agricultural and industrial products which might become valuable as articles of trade between India and Europe. Marco Polo, in his travelogue[93], speaks of brisk maritime trade and commerce along the Indian coasts. He describes the life and condition of the common people and gives a vivid account of their dress, food habits, manners and social customs.

More than a century and a half later, yet another Venetian, Nicolo Conti (Nicolo de'Conti), visited southern India under similar conditions. As a young man Nicolo Conti had settled in Damascus as a merchant sometime in the beginning of the fifteenth

century. The spirit of adventure and exploration led him to the countries of the East, including India, Ceylon, Sumatra, Java and China. It is said that, after about twenty-five years of wanderings he ultimately returned to his mother country in c. 1444. While in Cairo, he fall into the hands of some arab fanatics; lost his wife and two children, and was compelled to renounce Christianity in order to save his life. On return to Rome, he pleaded for absolution for his apostasy from Pobe Eugene IV. The latter granted his request on the simple condition that, as a penance, he should narrate his true adventures in the far-off lands. His narrative, which was recorded in Latin by the Pope's secretary (Poggio Bracciolini), constitutes the travelogue of Nicolo Conti.[94] He had sailed along the coast of Malabar and visited the interior of Deccan in c. 1420. His travelogue gives a few glimpses of the royal court of Vijayanagar and throws light on the socio-economic condition of south India in general. Similarly, the description of south India by Duarte Barbosa, a Portuguese official in Cochin during c. 1500-16, is of great geographical and ethnographical significance.[95] So also is the narrative of another Portuguese traveller, Domingos Paes, who visited Vijayanagar kingdom during c. 1500-02.[96]

India was known to the west 'as a great populous country, rich in gold, spices and textiles' since time immemorial. In the *middle ages*, Constantinople, 'then the chief mart for Indian goods,' conveyed by the northern overland routes, was the centre of attraction for the European merchants. Amongst them, the Venetians enjoyed unrivalled monopoly of the Indian trade through Egypt in the first half of the fifteenth century;[97] they worked in collaboration with their Indian and Arabian counterparts who shipped the Indian goods to Egypt through the Arabian Sea. The Turkish occupation of Constantinople (1453 A.D.) and the subsequent spread of the Ottoman sway in northern Africa, including Egypt, gave a serious set-back to the trade relationships between India and Europe. Portugal, under the leadership of Henry the Navigator, was the first European country to undertake the task of opening up direct trade with India. After the discovery of the sea-route to India via the Cape of Good Hope by Vasco de Gama (1497 A.D.), the Portuguese established and zealously maintained their monopoly of eastern trade for ever a century until they received an effective challenge from the Dutch, the French and the English.

Revival of European contacts with India through the sea-route opened the flood gates of the subcontinent to the merchants, Christian missionaries, travellers and adventurers. It is impossible to estimate even approximately the number of Europeans who visited India during the period of the imperial mughals. The mughal authority was well established over a vast portion of the country in the seventeenthcentury while the peripheral territories were governed by the local rulers, most of whom recognised, explicitly or implicitly, the

paramountcy of the mughal crown. The imperial mughals enjoyed fame for their wealth, prowess and princely qualities; they meted out a liberal treatment towards the foreigners and gave complete freedom to the christian missionaries to carry on the propagation of their faith through peaceful means. The European visitors usually enjoyed the 'oriental hospitality' of the mughal monarchs and their bureaucracy in abundant measures. That is why the Europeans of all shades and hues continued to swarm the land like honey bees; many of them ventured to the imperial court just to have a glimpse of the Grand Mogor or Mogul. Of course, at the initial stages, they 'approached India in a mood of childlike wonder without the least sense of racial superiority; until the whole of the country was traversed and laid open by European travellers, India remained a part of those regions where everything was gorgeous and splendid.'[98] Soon after, there followed a rat-race among them to acquire whatever they could from this 'wonderland'. In the words of a modern historiographer of pre-independence era,

> "To the Portuguese, India seemed a second Peru, where diadems might be torn from the brows of the princes—nay, another new world for conquest and conversion; to the Dutch, she looked like a large market which afforded favourable field for ambitious enterprise; to the French, she was a big theatre for lucrative intrigue where they could reap a rich harvest of gains and fame; to the English, she was an emporium which offered untold trade facilities... In the scramble that followed among these four European rivals, the English, whose methods were less showy but more sure and successful, proved to be the fittest, and therefore, survived the remaining three."[99]

No wonder, quite a few of these Europeans have left valuable descriptions of their observations and experiences in the land of the Grand Moguls, in the form of diaries and travelogues, personal letters and communications addressed to their friends and relations in Europe, official papers and account books of their trade, religious or political activities, and reports of such missions to the courts of the mughal emperors, their provincial governors and other local rulers. The historical value of these differs from document to document, depending upon the objectives and intellectual standard of the writers. Some of these documents contain mere street gossip or deliberate distortion of facts, while many others reflect the racial, religious and national prejudices, borne by the writers towards India and its people. Nevertheless, taken as a whole, these accounts comprise a unique category of the primary source material which throws a flood of light on the contemporary history of the mughal period. Broadly speaking, it can be classified into three categories—records of the European factories,[100] travelogues of the merchants and adventurers, and the accounts of the christian missionaries. The Hakluyt Society of Great Britain, named after Richard Hakluyt (1552-1616), a famous English traveller, has made

a great contribution towards the advancement of historical research by publishing the accounts of many such travellers and adventurers who visited India during the mughal period.[101] They include Richard Hakluyt, William Hawkins, Sir Thomas Roe, Sir James Lancaster, William Hedges, Peter Mundy, John Jourdain, Pietro della Valle and many others.

Akbar's interest in religious and spiritual matters brought him in contact with the christian missionaries. In response to his invitation, three Jesuit missions from the Portuguese settlement at Goa visited the imperial court from 1580 to 1605 and stayed there long enough, as state guests, to explain the principles and practices of their religion. Their personnel comprised among others, Fr. Anthony Monserrate, Fr. Jerome Xavier and Fr. Emmanuel Pinheiro. The Jesuits continued to enjoy influence at the court of Jahangir as well. Their reports,[102] though highly prejudicial, are of immense value to the modern historiographers of the mughal age. The first known Englishman to reach India during the mughal period was Fr. Thomas Stevens[103] who joined the Society of Jesus at Goa and remained there for forty long years (1579-1619) as a missionary. Ralph Fitch was the first English merchant to visit Fatehpur Sikri and Agra. Captain William Hawkins was the first Englishman to appear in the mughal court during the reign of Jahangir. He had brought a gift of 25,000 gold coins and a letter from James I of England for securing trade facilities. Hawkins was well received by Jahangir (April 1609) in spite of the opposition of the Jesuit Fr. Pinheiro who represented the Portuguese interests at the mughal court. About Hawkins's trade mission to India, Lane-Poole observes:

> "It was a singular situation for a bluff sea-captain to find himself in an unknown land, called upon to meet a great Emperor about whom absolutely nothing was known in England. There was nothing to suggest the most distant dream that in two centuries and a half the slight introduction Hawkins was then effecting between England and India would culminate in the sovereignty of a British queen over the whole empire where the Light of the World (Nur Jahan) and her imperial husband then reigned."[104]

The second English merchant of note to appear at the court of Jahangir was Paul Canning who visited Agra in 1612. William Edwards brought (1615 A.D.) yet another letter from king James to the mughal emperor, *albeit* the most renowned English agent to visit the court of Jahangir was Sir Thomas Roe. He and his chaplain Terry stayed in India for over three years (September 1615—February 1619) and went about with Jahangir in his southern tour of Mandu and Ahmadabad; their mission was a failure *albeit* their accounts are of invaluable historical importance for the reconstruction of socio-cultural history of Jahangir's times. William Foster, in his book, entitled *Early Travels in India*,[105] has edited

and published the diaries of John Mildenhall (1603-5), Ralph Fitch (1583-89), William Hawkins (1603-13), William Finch (1608-11), Nicholas Withington (1612-16) and Thomas Coryat (1614-17). The diaries of many other European travellers to India such as Francois Bernier,[106] J. B. Tavernier,[107] J. A. Mandeslo.[108] Manucci,[109] Edward Terry,[110] Rebert Coverte,[111] Sir Thomas Herbert,[112] and Alexander Hamilton,[113] have also been published. De laet's *Description of India and Fragment of Indian History*[114] (1625 A.D.) has been found to be 'a complete gazetteer of Jahangir's India,' compiled faithfully by the writer.

Archaeological Sources

The archaeological sources, including the inscriptions, coins, monuments and other antiquities, are of immense value in the reconstruction of the socio-cultural history of medieval India. Edward Thomas was the first among the modern historiographers of medieval India to make extensive use of numismatics for the prepration of his book entitled *The Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Delhi*;[115] his work has been supplemented by the catalogue of coins in various museums of India and England.[116] The Archaeological Survey of India has brought many new sources to light.[117] These sources are particularly of great value to the historiographers of regional history of southern India and some Hindu states for the period during which they remained outside the pale of muslim domination. The inscriptions have been published mostly in the *Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica*, *Epigraphia Indica* and other antiquarian journals. A collection of all the inscriptions published in the *Epigraphia Indo Moslemica* (1907-38), chronologically arranged with summaries, is given by V.S. Bendrey in *A Study of Muslim Inscriptions*.[118] The researches done by Johan Marshall, Percy Brown,[119] Burgess,[120] Fergusson,[121] Havell,[122] Cousens,[123] and a host of other specialists in art and architecture give us an insight into the cultural trends of the times. They are a living testimony to the intermingling and synthesis of the hindu and muslim architectural traditions and structural designs, and reveal, in unambiguous terms, the living conditions, faiths and beliefs as well as the socio-cultural outlook of the Grand Mughals and the upper strata of the medieval Indian society.

Notes

1. Arnold J Toynbee, *A Study of History*; 12 vols; OUP, 4th impression, 1948, IV, p 230.
2. Wolseley Haig. CHI, III, p. 10.
3. A.B.M. Habibullah, *Foundation of Muslim Rule in India;* Allahabad, 2nd ed; 1961, p. 2.
4. Toynbee, Study of History, *op. cit;* VI, p. 285.
5. *Ibid*; IV, p. 98.

6. *ibid*; IV, pp. 98-100.
7. Refer to *ibid*; IV, pp. 5,129,131-32, 245, 257-60.
8. The turkish rulers of India styled themselves as *sultans*—viz; 'the kings'; therefore, their state became known as 'the sultanate'.
9. Mohibbul Hasan & Muhammad Mujeeb (ed.), *Historians of Medieval India;* Meenakshi, 19 8, p xi.
9. Mohibbul Hasan & Muhammad Mujeeb (ed.) , *Historians of Medieval India;* Meenakshi, 1968, p. xi.
10. Originally written in Arabic by an anonymous author, possibly a camp-follower of Muhammad bin Qasim, it was translated into Persian by Muhammad Ali bin Abu Bakr Kufi in the time of Nasiruddin Qabacha, a turkish slave officer of Muhammad Ghori, who had been appointed governor of Multan and Uchh (Sind) by his master. *Chachnama* was translated from Persian into English and edited by U. M. Daudpota, Hyderabad (Deccan), 1939, also trs by Mirza Kalichbeg Fredunbeg, Idarah-i-Adabiyat-i-Delli, 1979.
11. *BVB*, IV, pp. 170-71.
12. *ibid*; p. 171.
13. *Prithviraja Raso*, ed. by S S Das. Banaras, 1904; by Hazari Prasad Dwivedi & Namvar Singh, Allahabad, 1952; by Vipin Bihari Trivedi, Lucknow, 1953; and by B P Sharma, Chandigarh, 1963; also refer to *Prithviraja Raso-Aik Samiksha*, by Vipin Bihari Trivedi.
14. Originally written in Arabic it was translated later into Persian by others. Translated from Persian into English and edited by Edward C Sachau under the title, *Alberuni's India:* An account of the religion, philosophy, literature geography, chronology, astronomy, customs, laws and astrology of India about 1030 A.D"; 2 vols; (first puplished, London & Berlin, 1881-88; London reprint, 1910), Indian reprint, S Chand, 1964.
15. "Alberuni learned Sanskrit so that he might go to the sources of Hindu Thought; he read with delight the *Bhagavad Gita*; he studied *Samkhya* of Kapila, the book of Patanjali, and acquainted himself somewhat with the *Puranas*. . . For a Muslim, living in the days of Sultan Mahmud, almost under his roof, to study Sanskrit and things Hindu was no mean achievement; it demanded an exceptional spirit of determination and perseverance and not a little audacity",— *Al Biruni Commemoration Volume*; Iran Society, Calcutta. 1951.
16. Pers. Ms. K. P. Jaiswal Research Institute, Patna; extracts, *E&D* II, pp. 202-40.
17. a comprehensive history of the Islamic world in twenty-three small but compact volumes or books (*majilded*), entitled after his royal patron sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud. The portions of this work which relate to India (books 11&17 to 22) were printed in the *Bibliotheca Indica* under the superintendence of Major W N Less in a separate volume of 450 pages, 1863-64,—Eng. trs. by H.G. Raverty-*Bib. Indica*. 1881; extracts, *E&D II*, pp. 256-379.
18. K.A. Nazami, Religion and Politics, *op, cit*: pp. 368-69.
19. Ed. by S.A. Khan, *Bib. Indica*, Calcutta, 1862; extracts, E&D III, pp. 93-268.
20. Eng. trs. with annotations and introduction bv Muhammad Habib & Mrs. Afsar Afzaluddin, under the tittle, *The Political Theory of the Delhi Sultanate*; Aligarh, 1960.
21. For details, refer to *Volume* I of this study, p. 12.
22. In the work of K. A. Nizami. "Barani is one of those historians who refuse to enlighten a reader unless he has thoroughly familiarised himself with the basic categories of his thought and the chief characteristics of his personality. The *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi* is, indeed, for one who knows Ziauddin Barani. see Mohibbul Hasan, Historians of Medieval India, *op. cit*; p. 50.

23. ed. by Wilayat Husain, *Bib. Indica*, Calcutta, 1891; extracts, E&D III, pp. 269-373.
24. *E&D* III, p. 270.
25. ed. by N.B. Roy, JRASB, VIII, 1941; by S. A. Rashid, Aligarh, 1954; edited also with Urdu trs. and notes by M.A. Chaghatai, Poona, 1941.
26. Trs. from Persian into English by Major Stewart, Oriental Translation Fund, 1830; extracts, *E&D* III, pp. 389-477.
27. *E&D* III, pp. 478-522.
28. Named after Sultan Mubarak Shah (1421-34) to whom the book was dedicated by the author; ed by M. Hidayat Husain, *Bib. Indica*, 1931; extracts, E & DIV, pp. 6.88.
29. ed. by Agha Mahdi Husain, Agra, 1938; also by A.S. Usha, Madras, 1950.
30. Originally written in his mother-tongue *Chaghatai Turki*; it was translated twice in Persian during the reign of Akbar. Trs. into Eng. & ed. by Johan Leyden & William Erskine under the title, *Memoirs of Zahir Ed Din Muhammad Babar, Emperor of Hindustan, written by himself in the Jaghatai Turki;* Longman, London, 1826; it is thoroughly revised and annotated version (1922 A.D.) by L. King; also by Mss. Annette Susannah Beveridge, entitled, *The Baburnama*; 2 vols: London, 1922: Indian reprint, New Delhi, 1970.
31. Ney Elias & E Denison Ross (trs. & ed.), *A History of the Moghuls of Central Asia; Being the Tarikh i Rashidi of Mirza Muhammad Haider Dughlat;* London, 1895; Indian reprint, Patna, 1973.
32. A. S. Beveridge (Trs. & ed.), *The History of Humayun (Humayun Nama);* Oriental Translation Series-1, 1901; Indian reprint, Delhi, 1972.
33. Ishwari Prasad, *Life and Times of Humayun;* Orient Longman, 1955, p. 389.
34. Maternal grandson of Mir Khwand or Mirkhond, the celebrated author of *Rauzat us Safa*.
35. ed. by M. Hidayat Husain, *Bib. Indica*, Calcutta, 1940; Eng. trs. by Beni Prasad, 1940.
36. Major Charles Stewart, *The Tezkereh Al Vakiat* or 'Private Memoirs of the Moghul Emperor Humayun,' written in the Persian language by Jouhar, a confidental Domestic of His Majesty ; Orient Translation Fund, London, 1832.
37. *E&D* IV, pp. 301-433.
38. ed. by M. Hidayat Husain, *Bib. Indica*, Calcutta, 1939; extracts, *E&D* V, pp. 1-66.
39. *E&D* IV, pp, 434-513.
40. *ibid;* p. 434.
41. ed. by Imamuddin, Deccan, 1960. A shorter recension of the same work, entitled *Makhzan i Afghani*, Eng. trs. by B Dorn, OTF, London, 1829-36. The differences between the two recensions are given in *E&D* V, pp. 67-115, with copious notes.
42. B. P. Ambashthya in W. H. Lowe (trs. & ed.), *Muntakhab ut Tawarikh* by Abdul Qadir ibn i Mulukshah, known as Al-Badaoni; Vol. II, revised ed; Patna, 1973, p. vii.
43. ed. by B. De & Muhammad Hidayat Husain, ASB, *Bid. Indica*, Calcutta, 3 vols; 1913-40; Eng. trs. by B. De and B. Prasad, *Bib. Indica*, 1927-40; extracts *E&D* V, pp. 177-476.
44. Pers. text ed. by Agha Ahmad Ali & Abdul Rahim, 3 vols; *Bib. Indica*, ASB, Calcutta, 1873-86; Eng. trs. by H. Beveridge, *Bib. Indica*, Calcutta, 1897:1909
45. The original text of the *Ain i Akbari*, as prepared by Abul Fazl, consisted of a single volume, *albeit* its Pers. text was edited by H. Blochmann and published by ASB in two volumes; *Bib. Indica* 1857-77. The subject-matter of these two volumes was further split up to form three volumes by its Eng. translators. For the Eng. trs. of the *Ain*, see F. Gladwin *Ayeen Akbery of*

Abul Fazl, 3 vols; Calcutta, 1783-86; H. Blochmann, *The Ain i Akbari of Abul Fazl Allami*, vol. I, Calcutta, 1973; its revised edition by D C Phillott, Calcutta, 1939; H. S. Jarrett, *The Ain i Akbari by Abul Fazl Allami*, vol. II(1891), vol. III (1894), *Bib. Indica*; revised and further annotated by Jadunath Sarkar, vol. II (1949), vol. III (1948), Calcutta.

46. Nawal Kishore Press, Lucknow, 1913.
47. *ibid;* Lucknow, 1846,
48. His reward comprised a horse a *shawl*, and one thousand *bighas* of rent-free land as *madad i muash*.
49. Pers. text in 3 vols; ASB, *Bib. Indica*, Calcutta, 1861-69. For the Eng. trs; published by ASB from Calcutta in three volumes, see Vol. I, trs. & ed. by George S. A. Ranking (1898); Delhi reprint, 1973 by *Idarah i Adabiyat i Delli*, series no. 19. Nol. II, trs. & ed. by Lowe, and further annotated by Ambashthya *op. cit*; Vol. III, trs. & ed. T. W. Haig, 1925.
50. M. Mujeeb in M. Hasan, Historians of Medieval India, *op. cit;* pp. 108-9.
51, *ibid;* p. 112.
52. *ibid.*
53. Eng. trs. & ed. by John Briggs under the title, *History of the Rise of the Mahommedan Power in India Till the Year 1612;* 4 vols; London, 1829; reprinted by R. Cambray & Co. of Calcutta, 1908-10; Urdu trs. by M. Fida Ali Talib, 4 vols; Hyderabad, 1926-32.
54. Pers. text, ASB, *Bib. Indica*, 1941; abstracts by H. Beveridge in JASB, vol. lxvii, pt. i, no. 4, 1892, pp. 296-316; Eng. trs; excluding the first three chapters, by B. P. Saksena in the Allahabad University Studies, vol. vi, pt. i, 1930, pp. 71-148.
55. Ms. no. 551, at the Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, Bankipore Patna.
56. Ms. no. 537, Khuda Bakhsh Library *op. cit;* extracts, *E&D* VI, pp. 175-81.
57. Ms. no. 536, Khuda Bakhsh Library, Patna.
58. *E&D* V, pp. 150-76.
59. Pers. text litho. by N.K. Press, Lucknow, 1904.
60. Pers. text ed. by Sayyad Ahmad Khan, Aligarh, 1864: Eng. trs. by Rodgers & Henry Beveridge, 2 vols; RAS, London, 1909-14: extracts, *E&D* VI, pp. 276-391.
61. Pers. text ed. by Abd Ali Hai & Ahmad Ali, *Bib. Indica*, 1865; extracts, *E&D* VI, pp. 399-438.
62. Ms. no. 566, Khuda Bakhsh Library, Patna.
63. Pers. text, 2 vols; *Bib. Indica*, 1866-72; extracts, *E&D* VII, pp. 5-72.
64. Ms. copy in the Raghubir Library Sitamau.
65. Pers. text ed. by Ghulam Yazdani, *Bib. Indica*, 4 vols; 1912-46; extracts, *E&D* VII, pp. 124-32.
66. Pers. text, 2 vols; *Bib. Indica*, Calcutta; extracts, *E&D* VII, pp. 174-80.
67. *E&D* VII, p. 174.
68. Pers. text, *Bib. Indica*, 1869; extracts, *E&D* VII, pp. 207-533.
69. *History of Aurangzeb;* 5 vols; II, Calcutta, 1912, pp. 303-4.
70. Ms. copy in the National Library (Sarkar collection), Calcutta.
71. *ibid.*
72. Ms. no. 579, Khuda Bakhsh Library, Patna, extracts, *E&D* VII, pp. 536-64.
73. also called *Tarikh i Bahadur Shahi;* extracts, *E&D* VII, pp. 571-73.
74. also styled as the *Tazkirat us Salatin i Chaghatai;* Ms. no. 591, Khuda Bakhsh Library, Patna.

75. *E&D* VIII, pp. 22-23.
76. Yusuf Husain, *Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture;* Calcutta, 1957, p. 121.
77. Edited by S. Moinul Haq, Aligarh, 1927; also by M. Wahid Mirza, Calcutta, 1953; Eng. trs. by M. Habib, entitled, *The Campaigns of Alauddin Khalji*; Madras, 1931; extracts. *E&D* III, pp. 67-92.
78. Edited by Mohammad Ismail, Aligarh, 1918.
79. Edited by Yasin Khan Niazi, Oriental College Magazine, 1936-37; extracts, *E&D* III, pp. 534-43.
80. Edited by Mohammad Ismail, Aligarh, 1918.
81. Edited by Muhammad Wahid Mirza, OUP, Calcutta, 1950; extracts, *E&D* III, pp. 557-65; partial trs. by R. Nath & Faiz Gwaliari, under the title, *India as Seen by Amir Khusrau*; Historical Research Documentation Programme, Jaipur, 198.
82. Edited by Hashim Faridabadi, Aurangabad, 1933.
83. Hasan Askari in Mohibbul Hasan, *Historians of Medieval India loc. cit;* pp. 34-35.
84. *ibid;* p. 34.
85. K. M. Ashraf, *Life and Condition of People of Hindustan;* Munshiram Manoharlal, New Delhi, sec. ed; 1970, p. 15.
86. Nath & Faiz Gwaliari, India as Seen by Amir Khusrau, *op. cit;* p. ix.
87. It show the deep impact of astronomy on the lives and thoughts of the people and the literary compositions of the medieval age.
88. 5 vols; Lucknow, 1876.
89. K. A. Nizami, *Studies in Medieval Indian History and Culture;* Kitab Mahal, Allahabad, 1966, p. 1.
90. Eng. trs. by A. Mahdi Husain entitled *The Rehla of Ibn Battuta*, Baroda, 1953; abridged trs. by H. A. E. R. Gibb, Broadway Travellers Series, London, 1929; also, by the Hakluyt Society, second series, Cambridge, 1958; *E&D* III, pp. 585-619.
91. Eng. trs. by R H Major in *India in the Fifteenth Century;* 'Being a Collection of Narratives of Voyages to India;' Hakluyt Society, London, 1857; Indian reprint, Deep Publications, Delhi, 1974.
92. R. H. Major *op. cit.*
93. *Travels of Marco Polo;* Eng. trs. with notes by H. Yule and H. Cordier, 2 vols; London, 1903, 1920.
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Chapter 1

The State and Society

The Socio-cultural development of a people can be understood better within the framework of a political system to which they belong. The state, though primarily a political organisation, occupies the foremost place among all the associations and institutions of a society because it wields coercive powers of supervision and control over the various aspects of socio-cultural life. It is in this context that the study of the nature and character of 'the muslim rule' in Delhi becomes a prerequisite to the proper understanding of the society and culture of its times.

The Islamic Theory of State

The sultanate of Delhi was declared 'an Islamic state' by its turko-afghan rulers. They had brought with them a theocratic concept of state, according to which the head of the state was also regarded as the religious leader of his people—'the millat', and was believed or presumed to derive his position and authority from God. By force of circumstances, the Prophet Muhammad' on his *hijrat* or 'migration' from Mecca to Medina, was called upon to assume the political leadership of his followers for the protection of their lives and property. He thus laid the foundation of the first muslim state in the world and assumed a double role as founder of Islam as well as temporal head of 'the faithful'. God was said to be the true ruler of 'the faithful' and the Prophet ruled over them on behalf of the Almighty with the object of enforcing and spreading the Quranic law which had been declared as 'a divine revelation' by the Prophet himself. Therefore, 'the muslim state', from its very inception, was a theocracy[1] *par excellence*. The ideas from Greek political philosophy were actually borrowed by the muslim theologians in their attempt to provide 'a legal basis' to and put forward as 'the rational justification' for the institutions adopted or developed by them.[2] In the words of Ishwara Topa,

> "The Prophet of Islam founded a theocratic state. It was a system of political and social control, based on divine sanctions. It reflected the will of God in its movements and activities. Its

> desire was to Islamise life in accordance with the law of God. Its dictates were divine laws to be imposed on human beings for their guidance. The aim of the Prophet was to organise and discipline people into a nation in which religious diversions, social inequality, political disunity, and economic exploitation should not exist..... The law of Islam was the law of the Islamic state."[3]

Thus, Islam[4] does not separate religion from politics; in fact, the concept of religion in Islam emerged first, the state was 'an after-thought.[5] The traditional Islmaic law does not acknowledge 'the independent existence of state, nor is state regarded as a primary condition of human society.[6] It makes the state completely subservient to the religion of the Prophet. According to the Islamic law, the state is only an instrument to serve the creed in the attainment of its objectives or fulfilment of ideals of the muslim brotherhood. The Islamic theory of state was, therefore, based on a threefold idea of one scripture, one sovereign and one nation; scripture was the holy *Quran*,[7] sovereign was the *imam* (leader), also called *khalifa* (the caliph)—political successor to the Prophet, and nation was the *millat*—the muslim brotherhood. The basic feature of the state, according to this theory, was its 'indivisibility' in all the three aspects. It contemplated the establishment of a theocratic state based on the Islamic law, and recommended only one sovereign, the caliph, to rule over the whole of the muslim world. The caliph was styled as the *amir ul momnin*—'the leader of the faithful'; his office was thus a political institution based on Islamic injunctions. The sovereignty resided in the *millat* which elected their *imam* or the caliph, and the latter was under religious obligation to implement the Islamic law on and for the benefit of his muslim subjects. The Islamic government was, therefore, one which was composed of the muslims, by the muslims and existed for the happiness and welfare of the muslims alone.

The Islamic theory of state had gradually developed and undergone radical changes long before the establishment of the sultanate of Delhi. The monarchical form of government, the basic feature of the sultanate, was itself an extra-Quranic growth which had evolved and entered the fold of Islam on the Persian soil.

Nature and Character of the Sultanate

The sultanate of Delhi was 'an Islamic state' whose monarchs, the dominant nobility and the higher administrative hierarchy belonged to the muslim faith. Theorectically, the sultans were expected to enforce the Islamic law (*shairat*) in the land and administer their dominions in a way as to transform the *dar ul harb* —'the land of the infidels', into *dar ul Islam*. They professed nominal allegiance to the caliph and felt pride in obtaining investiture from him. With the exception of Alauddin Khalji and Mubarak Shah Khalji, all other sultans styled themselves as deputies

of the caliph with the titles such as *nasir i amir ul momnin*—'assistant of the leader of the faithful', or *yamin ul khalifa*—'the right-hand man of the caliph'. In actual practice, however, the sultans were sovereign rulers who did not derive their powers from, nor depended upon any external force; they were independent rulers of their territorial possessions and did not owe their sovereignty to any worldly power, neither the caliph nor the *millat*. However, being foreign adventurers, who were called upon to rule over vast territories of the country, inhabited primarily by the hindus, they thought it politically expedient to maintain formal contacts with the Islamic world beyond the Khyber so as to produce a psychic of fear among the hindus by alluding to the potential source of their strength. Similarly, theoretically speaking, the sovereignty resided in the *millat* which was supposed to elect the sultan but, in actual practice, the *millat* served as the mainstay of the muslim monarchy, in general. The *millat* could voice its approval or disapproval of the policies and actions of a particular sultan *albeit* it could neither elect a sultan according to the modern democratic norms nor depose an incompetent or unworthy ruler. The kingdom of Delhi was carved out and extended by some capable and ambitious military generals by force of arms and they wielded the crown by their ability and military prowess alone. Moreover, the overwhelming majority of their *raiyyat*—'the subjects', happened to be non-muslims and the so-called *millat* constituted but a part of it.

According to the traditional Islamic theory of state, the sultans usually professed to administer the Islamic law though the political institutions set up by them did not always conform to the orthodox Islamic principles. These were deeply influenced by the Indian traditions and customs and incorporated many elements of the rajput polity with or without modifications. Some of the practices and policies of the sultanate were actually opposed to the spirit of the traditional Islamic law. The real strength or weakness of the sultanate depended on the personality and character of the sultan. His government was based on highly centralised despotic principles. Some of the sultans formally introduced the Islamic law within their dominions, *albeit* there was no rule of law in the sultanate; the word of the sultan was treated as law. Alauddin Khalji, backed by a strong army, could afford to defy the Islamic principles of government and administration, make the *ulama* subservient to him, and declare that he was the state, as did Louis XIV of France, at a later stage.

The founding fathers of the sultanate did not belong to any ruling house or families of high social status, they started their careers as slaves, not even as ordinary free citizens. Therefore, they did not claim any noble pedigree or hereditary right to hold the crown; even if they did, none took them seriously. There was no fixed law of succession to the throne among them. Assumption of the crown depended on the dictums—'survival of the fittest' and

'might is right'. No wonder, the sultan occupied the most privileged position in the administrative set up of the sultanate; he was the pivot round which the entire administrative structure of the sultanate revolved. The sultan was the chief executive, sole legislator, the fountain-head of justice, and the supreme commander of the armed forces. He made appointments to all the top civil and military offices and the entire bureaucracy functioned under his personal direction and control. The muslim jurists assigned ten functions or duties to the sultan in his capacity as the chief executive of an Islamic state. These comprised protection of the faith, defence of the muslim territories, protection of the frontiers of the state against foreign aggression, war against the enemies of Islam, enforcement of the criminal code, and maintenance of law and order, administration of justice, collection of revenues, disbursement of grants and wages to those who deserved an allowance from the public exchequer, appointment of trustworthy and capable counsellors and administrators, and control of the public affairs through personal inspections, and general supervision of the administrative machinery.[8] The sultan forfeited his claim to the throne if he failed to perform these duties deliberately or discharged them wilfully. His duties towards the non-muslim subjects were also well-defined by the Islamic law. The 'infidels' were not to be treated as full-fledged citizens of the Islamic state; nevertheless, once they acknowledged the suzerainty of the state and agreed to pay *jaziya*, they acquired the status of *zimmis*, and the sultan was under obligation to protect their lives and property and accord them some freedom of worship and social life.

Balban's Theory of Kingship

Ghiasuddin Balban (1266-86), the greatest 'slave' sultan of Delhi, who consolidated the turkish rule in northern India, established an absolute monarchy by suppressing all opposition to the crown. He claimed divine sanction for the office of the sultan and exploited the religious sentiments of his people to strengthen his hold over the state. The caliph of Baghdad was no more[9] but Balban continued to inscribe his name on the coins so that his co-religionists might extend their unqualified obedience to him as *nasir i amir ul momnin*— 'the righthand man of the caliph'. Balban traced his descent from the mythical turkish hero Afrasiyab and made an oblique attempt to create a halo of superiority round the monarchy. His theory of kingship was akin to that of the 'divine rights of kings' as professed by the tudor and stuart monarchs of England. Balban was the first Indian muslim ruler to give currency to the epithet *zil i Ilahi*—'the shadow of God' for himself; it was inscribed on the coins. As the self-styled 'viceregent of God on earth', Balban intended to make it known that he was above law as well as the turkish ruling elite who had brought the sultanate into existence; he ruled by 'divine sanction' and was not answerable to any worldly authority for the discharge of his powers and

functions as sovereign. He thus attempted to raise the status and prestige of the crown by claiming divine powers for it. Obviously, 'this was a subtle religious device to sanctify the exercise of his despotic authority.'[10]

Barani gives a detailed treatment to the theory of kingship as propounded by Balban himself; no other sultan of Delhi ever laid stress on it in dialogue and court proceedings like Balban, not even Alauddin Khalji, in the later period, who happened to be the most powerful despotic monarch of the Delhi sultanate. The funniest part of it was that Balban never felt tired of delivering sermons on this issue to those *shamsi* nobles with whom he had once shared the power of the state as a slave officer of Altumish. By propagating such theories, Balban intended to exact reverence and loyalty from the common man *albeit* he made himself a subject of ridicule among his ex-colleagues who read in his rhetorics a blunt warning that they must not consider themselves to be 'kingmakers' any longer, and that they would be dealt with severely if they poked their nose into the affairs of the sultan.

In order to establish his claim of divine origin of the sovereign, Balban effected a radical change in his dress, social behaviour and manners. He gave up drinking, cut off the jovial company of his courtiers, banned public drinking by the nobility and acquired aloofness from the people. He assumed a serious and reserved posture towards all, put on magnificent royal costumes, and was always accompanied by the imperial paraphernalia. Balban always maintained the external dignity, bore frowned looks and displayed an awe-inspiring personality. Barani writes that, after his accession to throne, even the domestic servants of Balban never saw him without royal apparel, socks and the head-gear.[11] He was a typical 'oriental despot' who displayed his autocratic powers and the grandeur and prosperity of his realm through his court. He organised a grand *durbar* on the Persian model which became famous throughout central Asia for its pomp and magnificence; all that the imagination could conceive of royal splendour was embodied in it. His courtiers put on prescribed costumes, made of fine silken, woollen and cotton garments, studded with jewels, diamonds and gold ornaments. Balban set on a huge throne, bedecked with rich drapery and precious diamonds which dazzled the eyes of the onlookers; behind the sultan stood his guards, tall and muscular turkish slaves, in rich attire and heavily armed, with drawn-out swords. *Sijda* or prostration, and *paibos* or kissing of the feet of the sultan, were the normal forms of salutation in the court which left the nobility and visitors utterly humbled, terror-stricken and dumb-founded. Stern discipline was enforced in the *durbar*; the courtiers and foreign dignitaries occupied their seats in a specified manner, all but two representatives of the caliph[12] had to keep standing throughout the court proceedings. None was permitted to speak without the permission of the sultan; he himself spoke but very little and that only

to the highest dignitaries. He never laughed nor allowed any courtier to smile in his presence; none dared to interrupt the sultan or defy his orders. Balban discriminated between the high-born and the low-born people; the former were further given unequal treatment on racial considerations. He never gave high posts to the non-turks or men of doubtful antecedents. Noble pedigree became a fad with him. Kamal Mahiya, a capable military officer and administrator, was not appointed *iqtadar* of Amroha just because he turned out to be the son of a hindu convert; even those high officials who had recommended his name for the appointment were reprimanded and punished.[13] As a matter of fact, Balban suffered from an inferiority complex which tempted him to assume a haughty and aggressive demeanour against the commoners: his prejudicial conduct towards the ruling elite was in no way conducive to the well-being of the Delhi sultante and its grandees.

Alauddin's Theory of Divine Rights of Kingship

Alauddin Khalji (1266-1316), the greatest of all the sultans of Delhi, went a step further in expounding the theory of divine rights of kingship without any reservations. He declared himself the *zil i Ilahi* and claimed divine powers and virtues for the sovereign who, according to him, stood no comparison with the other human beings. He believed in the dictum—'kingship knows no kinship' which implied that all the inhabitants of his dominions were either his servants or his subjects. He regarded the king to be above the law of the land; rather his word was the law. This concept was in contradiction to the principles of Islamic theology on which the turkish state was originally said to have been founded.

Alauddin Khalji was a sunni *mussalman* who professed adherence to the faith and never disputed the injunctions of Islamic law, nevertheless as a ruler, he was a law unto himself. In his dialogue with *qazi* Mughisuddin of Bayana on the state policy, Alauddin once expressed his views thus:

> "To prevent rebellion, in which thousands perish, I issue such orders as I conceive to be for the good of the state, and the benefit of the people. Men are heedless, disrespectful, and disobey my commands; I am then compelled to be severe to bring them into obedience. I do not know whether this is lawful or unlawful; whatever I think to be for the good of the state, or suitable for the emergency, that I decree."[14]

Alauddin's rhetorics on the state policy as given above can be understood better if we substitute the word *him* for 'the state' and *his self-interest* for 'the good of the state'. So far as his position as head of 'an Islamic state' was concerned, Alauddin continued to style himself *yamin ul khilafat, nasiri amir ul momnin; alebeit* he never felt the necessity of invoking the caliph's name to justify and

strengthen his claim to sovereignty. He never applied for investiture by the caliph nor regarded the latter to be his political superior; reference to the caliph in official records continued to be made simply to keep the fiction of caliphate theoretically alive.

The *ahl e shamshir*—'the nobility', and *ahl e qalam* — 'the ulama', wielded influence in the state affairs and exercised some check on the powers and functions of 'the mamluk' sultans (1206-90) of Delhi; Alauddin Khalji sternly curbed their power and did not give them a free hand in determining the state policy. He was a highly self-willed and autocratic ruler who struck terror in the hearts of his ministers, military generals and the ruling elite, therefore, none dared to give him any advice or contradict his views or orders. The nobles were kept firmly under his thumb by the sultan while the *ulama*, though kept in good humour, were never permitted to interfere in state politics. Of course, Alauddin did not antagonise the *mullas* and *sheikhs* through public criticism or ridicule. The muslim scholars, saints, sheikhs, and the *mullas* received liberal stipends (*madad i muash*) and honours. All posts in the judicial and educational establishments were reserved for them; their chiefs were given a free hand in administering the educational institutions, courts, holy places, religious endowments and charitable funds. They also enjoyed sufficient freedom of action in tackling the socio-religious problems of the muslim community. At times, Alauddin successfully exploited muslim fanaticism in his wars against the hindu chieftains and treatment of the *zimmis*. Nevertheless, Alauddin Khalji was the first among the turkish sultans of Delhi to separate religion from the state politics; he initiated what may be called a secular state policy based on the principles of absolute despotism. Barani has to say that Alauddin Khalji.

> "came to the conclusion that polity and government are one thing, and the rules and decrees of (Islamic) Law are another. Royal commands belong to the king, legal decrees rest upon the judgment of *qazis* and *muftis*. In accordance with this opinion, whatever affair of state came before him, he only looked to the public good, without considering whether his mode of dealing with it was lawful or unlawful. He never asked for legal opinions about political matters, and, very few learned men visited him."[15]

Alauddin's long reign of twenty years provides us with only two instances when he had some discussion, at his own initiative, with two experts on Islamic theology, Alaul Mulk, the *kotwal* of Delhi—and personal friend of the sultan, and Mughisuddin, the *qazi* of Bayana and one of the greatest theologians of his age. Of course, Alauddin did not annoy the *ulama* by challenging their right to have a say in the state affairs but subordinated them through liberal state patronage and tactfulness which, coupled with

his the exercise of autocratic authority, in general, cowed them down to abject obedience.[16] Mughisuddin was treated as one of the ordinary *amirs* at the court and never accorded any special treatment by virtue of his being an expert in Islamic law. One day 'when efforts were being made for the increase' of taxes on the subjects, Alauddin told Mughisuddin that he 'had several questions to ask him, and desired him to speak the plain truth.' It shook the *qazi* to the bones and he replied :

> "The angel of my destiny (death) seems to be close at hand, since your majesty wishes to question me on matters of religion; if I speak the truth, you will be angry and kill me."

The sultan promised to spare his life but 'commanded him to answer in accordance with what he had read in books (Islamic law).' The *qazi* began to quote at length the Islamic scriptures in reply to one of the queries pertaining to the treatment of hindus in 'an Islamic state', Alauddin 'smiled' at his answers and said,

> "I do not understand any of the statements thou hast made; ———I have taken my measures, and have made my subjects obedient, so that at my command they are ready to creep into holes like mice."[17]

It clearly shows that Alauddin Khalji was an autocrat whose word was law, and whose theory of kingship had nothing to do with the traditional Islamic principles.

Revival of Theocratic Regime

Mubarak Shah Khalji (1316-20), the son and successor of Alauddin Khalji, subscribed to the concept of sovereignty as envisaged by his illustrious father, *albeit* his untimely and violent death brought the experiment to a sudden end. The successive sultans of Delhi, with the exception of Muhammad bin Tughluq, failed to pursue this concept of kingship and the sultanate reverted to a theocracy once again. Firoze Tughluq (1351-88) revived contacts with the caliph by seeking an investiture from him and assumed the title of *naib i amir ul momnin*; he read the *khutba* and struck coins in the name of the caliph Firoze Tughluq was an orthodox *sunni mussalman* who resorted to religious bigotry as a matter of state policy, *albeit*, by virtue of his gentle and human nature, he could not afford to be cruel and inhuman towards the non-muslims in actual practice. He suffered from an inferiority complex that he had been born of a hindu mother; therefore, in order to establish his credibility as the sovereign of 'an Islamic state' and leader of the faithful', he publicly demonstrated contempt for hinduism and displayed extraordinary zeal for Islam. He was equally intolerant of the *shias* and other muslim dissenters.

He always attempted to win the goodwill and support of the *ulama* and extended the influence of theologians in the state affairs.

Treatment of Non-Muslims in the Muslim States[18]

The Islamic theory of state did not permit the existence of any religion other than Islam; none but the muslims were considered to be the rightful citizens of 'an Islamic state'. Nevertheless, the existence of some non-muslims, who refused to embrace Islam, had to be tolerated within the territorial jurisdictions of an Islamic state from its very inception under the leadership of Prophet himself. The 'nonbelievers' were divided into two broad categories—*ahl e kitab* or 'those who possessed some sort of revealed scripture' and *kafirs*—'the infidels'. The jews and christian inhabitants of Medina were recognised by the Prophet as *ahl e kitab* and granted protection and partial religious toleration in return for the receipt of *jaziya*—'the poll tax' from them. The term *jaziya*, which is derived from *jaza*, means 'compensation of requittal from good or evil' ; the Quran says:

> "Fight ye those who believe not in Allah, nor in the Final Day;
> Who do not make taboo that which has been made taboo by Allah and His Apostle ;
> Who follow not the teachings true among the Peoples of the Book;
> Until they willingly offer *jaziya* and are quite subdued."[19]

Accordingly, *jaziya* was originally levied upon non-muslims 'as a sign of humiliation, and compensation for security of life and property in a muslim state' and also as 'compensation for military service' from which they, 'being unbelievers', were exempt.[20] Those who paid the *jaziya* were called *zimmis* or 'the people under contract of protection by the Islamic state.' To begin with, only jews and christians were given the status of *zimmis* but, at a later stage, the zoroastrians, who were declared to be *musahab ahl e kitab* or 'those who resembled the possessors of revealed scriptures' were also included in this category. All the rest of the non-muslims, commonly styled as *kafirs* and *mushriks*—'infidels' or 'idolators', were denied the right of existence in a truly Islamic state. They were dubbed eternal enemies of Islam and condemned as *kable e gardan zadni* or 'those who were fit to be beheaded or extirpated'; they were confronted with either of the two alternatives—'Islam or Death'. The *Quran* issues the following instructions to 'the faithful'—

> "Say thou to the unbelievers,
> If (even now) they would desist (from infidelity), the past will be forgiven them;

> But if they still persist (there starteth then) the example of those who had preceded them.
> Then fight ye them until there is left on harassment, and the worship of Allah is altogether feasible."[21]

It is now a part of history that, during the very lifetime of the Prophet, the jews and christians of Medina, who had, in all humility accepted their inferior status as *zimmis* and begun to pay *jaziya* to 'the first muslim state', proved irksome to the 'true believers' and the Prophet was constrained to turn them out of Medina. Umar I (634-44 A.D.), the most famous of the Pious Caliphs, following in the foqtprints of the Prophet, expelled the jews and christians from the whole of Arabia, thus converting the homeland of the arabs into a true *dar ul Islam*.[22] The Prophet and the Pious Caliphs had thereby set the example of religious intolerance towards their non-muslim subjects, which was treated as an ideal by the orthodox muslim rulers.[23]

Muhammad bin Qasim, who laid the foundation of the muslim rule in Sind and Multan (711-12), secured the status of *zimmis* for his hindu subjects from the caliph and accorded protection to their lives and property on the receipt of *jaziya*. Obviously, this step was necessitated as a matter of political expediency because, in spite of the loss of independence, the hindu masses, in general, offered dogged resistance to forced conversions. It was physically impossible for Qasim and handful of his Arab followers to compel the vanquished multitude 'to choose between Islam and death', particularly, when they were 'armed to the teeth'.[24] Recognition of hindu 'idolators' as *zimmis* by Qasim proved to be 'a momentus decision'[25] because such a concession had earlier been denied to the 'idolators' of Arabia. His example was followed by the turko-afghan rulers of Delhi in their dealings with the hindus. The latter were not treated as full-fledged citizens of 'the Islamic state' *albeit* they received the status of *zimmis*—'the second-class' or 'inferior' citizens, which denied them all political rights and made them suffer from certain socio-religious and economic disabilities so as 'to prevent them from growing strong'. In the words of Jadu Nath Sarkar,

> "The very term *zimmi* is an insulting title. It connotes political inferiority and helplessness like the status of a minor proprietor, perpetually under a guardian; such protected people could not claim equality with the citizens of the muslim theocracy."[26]

There developed, with the passage of time, four schools of thought for the authoritative interpretation of *shara* or 'the Islamic law'[27]; these were known as Malakite, Shafiite, Hanbalite and Hanafite after the names of their founders—Malik ibn Anas (715-95 A.D.), Ash-Shafi (767-820), Ahmad bin Hanbal

(780-855) and Abu Hanifah[28] (699-766). Doctors of the first three schools offered no other alternative but death to 'the idolators', including the hindus, on their refusal to embrace Islam. It were the exponents of the Hanifah school alone who permitted their existence in the Islamic state as *zimmis*. That explains the intense hatred of the non-muslims by the orthodox muslim fanatics, in general; whenever a muslim ruler fell under the spell of such orthodox *ulama*, he adopted the policy of religious intolerance and persecution of his hindu subjects. It created a permanent gulf between the hindus and muslims which could not be bridged effectively for a long time. According to an observation, 'the political and religious condition under which the hindus were forced to live in a muslim state raised a great barrier between the two communities. The political supremacy of muslims was absolute; the hindus not only enjoyed no political status in practice, but could not even aspire to it under Islamic theory'.[29] While living in their own country and in possession of their own hearths and homes, the hindus were reduced to the status of inferior citizens of 'an Islamic state' as the sultanate of Delhi was usually styled. On the other hand, the muslims, though in microscopic minority, constituted the privileged or the most favoured children of the state who enjoyed the bounties and benefited from all the public welfare and other state enterprises.

Concept and Nature of Medieval Hindu Polity

Major part of India remained beyond the reach of the sultanate of Delhi in the thirteenth century. Big chunks of the country were outside the pale of the turkish rule even during the heyday of the sultanate under Alauddin Khalji and Muhammad bin Tughluq who had transformed it into an empire. In the course of its rapid disintegration (1335-1400), the sultanate gave birth to a number of powerful states and feudal chieftainships. These comprised, among others, the Bahmani and Vijayanagar empire, the well-established and prosperous provincial muslim states of Malwa, Gujarat, Jaunpur and Bengal, and powerful rajput states of Mewar and Marwar. In between them were interspersed hundreds of small states, semi-independent feudatory/principalities and petty estates of the tribal chiefs. The Bahmani empire and other muslim kingdoms of Malwa, Gujarat and Bengal, etc., which emerged on the ruins of the sultanate of Delhi, contributed very little to the theory and practice of the statecraft, they continued to function more or less on the pattern of the sultanate. The rajput principalities and other hindu states were based on the concept of monarchy as derived from the common source of the *dharmashastras;* their nature was more or less akin to that of the Viajayanagar empire which flourished in the south for about two centuries and set the standards for the hindu polity of the times.

Vijayanagar was a hindu theocratic state in which *dharma* was practised and encouraged and nothing against it was allowed.[30]

The state did not assume an attitude of neutrality in religious affairs. A Vijayanagar emperor popularised the concept of the divine rights of kingship. Like the sultan of Delbi, he was also a despotic ruler although the injunctions of the *dharma* and the local customs and traditions of the people served as 'checks upon the arbitrary exercise of his powers,' Nevertheless, 'there was no way of stopping his tyranny if he chose to be oppressive, or challenging his will except by rising in rebellion which hardly claimed any popular support[31]. K.S. Lal draws an interesting comparison between the sultanate of Delhi and the empire of Vijayanagar to highlight the nature and character of their rule, according to him, both were police states, governed by autocratic rulers who professed to rule by the injunctions of their respective religions, if the sultanate was said to have been based on the *shariat*, Vijayanagar drew its inspiration and guidance from the *dharma*. The political aims of the rulers were also the same—to carry on *digvijaya* or military conquests in all directions, 'a weak neighbour was the surest victim and any pretext was good enough to attack him.'[32] Rulers of both the states conducted the government with the assistance of their ministers and counsellors who were mostly drawn from the theologians or champions of their respective religions—the *ulama* in Delhi and the *brahmins* in Vijayanagar. Both the states had their religious endowment departments, managed exclusively by the leaders of the respective priestly class, 'which had a big say and much influence' in both the states. The Vijayanagar emperors were staunch hindus *albeit* they pursued a policy of religious toleration towards all of their subjects, including the muslims.[33] K.S. Lal observes that 'besides continuing the policy of toleration of South Indian rulers from the early times, there were many other reasons for this attitude and policy. In the first place, *Hindu Dharma* is not a proselytising religion. People are not even encouraged to embrace it, not to speak of being forced to do so. Therefore, it could not be a part of the state's duty to campaign for conversions or to give inducements or put economic pressure to obtain converts to Hinduism. In the second place, the *dharmashastras* do not lay down any specific laws prejudicial to the non-hindus. It is because of this that so many faiths and sects could flourish side by side in India, and so many philosophers could freely think, write and preach and so many schools of art could grow and develop.'[34] Besides, economic considerations also weighed heavily with the rulers of Vijayanagar in the pursuit of their policy of religious toleration towards the non-hindus. Theirs was a maritime empire; 'any religious intolerance would have discouraged foreign merchants from visiting the empire's ports. Such a situation would have sapped the very foundations of its prosperity, because it gained immensely from the sea-borne trade.'[35]

Of course, on similar and numerous other grounds, the sultans of Delhi, like their counterparts in Vijayanagar, had also to adopt a policy of religious toleration towards their hindu subjects within

the framework of their inferior status as *zimmis*. Nonetheless, religion predominated the state policies in Delhi in the north as well as Vijayanagar in south, throughout the early medieval period.

Akbar's Concept of a Secular National State

Of all the medieval Indian rulers, hindus as well as muslims, it was left to Akbar, the greatest mughal emperor, to evolve the concept of a secular national state for the whole of the country. His grandfather Babar had brought with him a concept of kingship which was a combination of the ideas inherited from his two great ancestors, Amir Timur and Changez Khan. The mongol chief had popularised the divine origin of his ruling family whereas Timur theoretically subscribed to the Islamic theory of state and maintained the fiction of the overlordship of the caliph; he did not assume a title higher than that or *amir* or *mirza*. Babar belived in the theory of divine rights of kingship and formally assumed the title of *padshah*, viz; 'the emperor,' in 1507, after he was firmly established as the ruler of Afghanistan. He did not recognise the legal paramountcy of the caliph whether dead or alive. So also was the case with Humayun. Sher Shah Sur discarded the traditional afghan theory of tribal leadership *albeit* he professed himself to be a muslim ruler of 'an Islamic state', nevertheless, he asserted the principle of absolute monarchy by assuming the title of 'khalifa of the age' or 'viceregent of the Prophet'.[36] His son and successor Islam Shah Sur retained the title of *khalifa* and invoked the name of religion for maintaining his hold over his Indian dominions.

Akbar thus received in heritage an Islamic polity which revolved round the personality of an absolute monarch as the *amir ul momnin*; it retained all the essential features of the traditional Islamic theory of state. Akbar, therefore, recognised, during the early years of his reign, the supremacy of the Islamic law as an instrument of state policy, and received homage from the mughal nobility and the *ulama* as 'defender of faith' and commander of the faithful' who was supposed to act as the *khadim i millet*—'servant of the muslim brotherhood' in the discharge of his functions as their leader. In other words, the muslim theologians and divines, called the *ulama*, who represented the public opinion of the *millat* or, the muslim brotherhood', expected to be treated as guides and counsellors by the king in the formulation of the state policy. Of course, they did hold high offices and exercised great influence over the state affairs in the beginning of Akbar's reign. He gradually liberated himself from the influence of the orthodox *sunni ulama*; the promulgation of the *mahzar* or 'the infallibility decree' so-called in September 1579 sounded the death-knell of their influence in the state affairs. Thereafter, Akbar boldly asserted his claim to be the impartial ruler of all his subjects, majority of whom happened to be hindus. All the socio-religious disabilities, from which the

hindus had suffered in the past, were done away with. They were accorded freedom of worship and granted equal rights of citizenship with their muslim fellow-brethren. The doors of civil and military services were thrown open to them so that they could identify their interests with those of the mughal state. All these measures cut at the very roots of the traditional Islamic theory of state. After about two decades of continuous experimentation and adaptation, Akbar, ultimately, matured a new concept of kingship which may be called Akbar's theory of state. It was based upon three fundamental principles—(a) absolute monarchy based on the theory of divine rights of kingship, (b) the concept of a secular nation-state of India, which stood essentially for (c) public welfare. Abul Fazl elaborates these principles in his own style at many places in the *Akbarnama*, including the *Ain i Akbari*. About the divine origin of Akbar's monarchy, he observes:

> "Kingship is a gift of God and is not bestowed till many thousand grand requisites have been gathered in an individual. Race and wealth and the assembling of a mob are not enough for this great position."[37]

Abul Fazl attributes superhuman powers to the monarch with the remarks that 'no dignity is higher in the eyes of God than royalty'.[38] Elsewhere he writes that 'the very sight of kings has been held to be a part of divine worship. They have been styled conventionally as the *zil i Ilahi*, and indeed to behold them is a means of calling to mind the Creator'.[39]

Exactly in the spirit of this statement, Akbar had actually assumed the title of *zil i Ilahi*. Abul Fazl further elaborates this principle in the following words:

> "Royalty is a light emanating from God, and a ray from the sun, the illuminator of the universe, the argument of the book of perfection, the receptacle of all virtues. Modern language calls this light *farr i izidi*—'the divine light', and the tongue of antiquity called it *kujan khura*—'the sublime halo'. It is communicated by God to kings without the intermediate assistance of any one, and men, in the presence of it, bend the forehead of praise towards the ground of submission."[40]

As a matter of fact, Akbar, through the agency of his lieutenants like Abul Fazl and others, attempted to popularise the ideas that his ruling family had descended from the sun through their celebrated female progenitor, Alanquawa. The worship of the sun had been introduced as one of the rituals in the imperial court by him. There was nothing surprising about it because the Indians were already familiar with their ancient *kshatriya* families of *suryavanshis* and *chandravanshis* who claimed their descent from

the sun and the moon respectively. Akbar had thus thoroughly Indianised his concept of absolute monarchy to win support from his hindu subjects.

The other two principles of Akbar's theory of state, viz; the concepts of a secular nation-state and public welfare were, likewise, the outcome of an evolutionary process, based upon his experiences as ruler and experimentation in the arts of diplomacy and statecraft. Akbar was a born soldier and imperialist by instinct. His initial impulse after assuming the reins of government in his hands as sovereign ruler was to extend the boundaries of his kingdom and attain ascendancy over the neighbouring rulers of India; war-preparedness was a must not only for a career of conquest but also for his very existence as independent ruler. His initial victories against his immediate neighbouring chiefs and successful suppression of revolts of the disaffected nobles and kinsmen gave him a degree of confidence needed for arousing the imperial instincts in him. The programme of random conquests launched by him during the first few years gradually assumed a form and methodology. He evolved a systematic plan for the expansion of his dominions. This plan received a fillip from his successful dealings with the rajputs, both as friends as well as foes. The adoption of a specific rajput policy by Akbar and his liberal religious out-look, resulting in the emancipation of his hindu subjects, were the two pillars upon which the grand edifice of his imperialist policy was laid. These two factors nurtured his imperialist instincts and provided a political philosophy to his military campaigns. Akbar now evolved an ambitious plan for the conquest of the Indian subcontinent with the object of establishing an all-powerfull imperial or central government under the mughal ruling house. The political unification of the country and the establishment of a strong central government with a uniform system of administration throughout the land became the ideals of his life. During the second half of his reign, it was not his land-hunger or the thrill of exploits which prompted his military actions; instead, he was guided by the political ideal to establish himself as the lord paramount of the whole of the country and earn reputation as the national monarch of all of its people. Though foreigner in blood, Akbar was every inch an Indian who, like the ancient *chakravartin* rulers of India, had developed a firm faith in the principle of one country, one government and one poeple. He stood for the political unification of the country and the national integrity of its people. Regionalism, racialism or religious considerations were totally superseded by the national sentiments in his scheme of conquests. Akbar spent the whole of his life in the fulfilment of this objective. To the good fortune of the Indians, he achieved a substantial measure of success in his efforts. Akbar granted complete religious freedom to his subjects, threw open the gates of impreial services to all without discrimination, and utilised the resources of the state for the welfare and happiness of his people. According to an opinion, 'Akbar was so

great because he was so thoroughly Indianised. His genius perceived the possibilities, and his courage undertook the task of welding the two communities—hindus and muslims, into a common *nation* by the universal bond of common imperial service and equal citizenship of a magnificent empire.[41]

Akbar identified himself completely with the land and its people and did his best to impart political and socio-cultural unity to the national state of India. His thecry of state was revolutionary in its contents and scope, it stood for a secular state as opposed to 'the Islamic state' of the muslim conception. It found favour with his hindu subjects and was accepted, though grudgingly, by majority of his muslim subjects. For Akbar it was not a text-book maxim; he took it rather seriously and strove his best to live upto it.

Revival of the Islamic Theory of Kingship by Aurangzeb

Akbar's concept of a secular nation-state and the lofty ideals of public were pursued by his successors Jahangir and Shah Jahan with unabated zeal, with the result that the mughal empire flourished and its people made strides in all walks of life for over a century. To the misfortune of the Indians, Aurangzeb proved a misfit in this newly emerging framework of a secular of nation-state; he revived the Islamic theory of state and recklessly reversed the wheel of national progress. Aurangzeb had been brought up under the influence of orthodox *sunni mullas* who acted as his principal guides all through his life. His accession to the throne, therefore led to the revival of the influence of the orthodox *mullas* in the state politics. Aurangzeb sincerely believed in the Islamic theory of state. He regarded the mughal empire to be an Islamic state and, as such, strove his best to act as an ideal muslim ruler. It was his keen desire to convert the *dar ul harb* of India into *dar ul Islam*. He looked upon the non-muslims as *kafirs*—'the infidels', and had no soft corner for the *shias* and *sufis* who, according to him, were not true *mussalmans*. In fact, Aurangzeb was an anti-thesis of Akbar in thought, word and deed. The reversal of Akbar's concept of a secular national state for India by Aurangzeb took place in stages the detailed narration of which has been given at an appropriate place in this study. His concept of public welfare was confined to the happiness and welfare of the orthodox muslims alone. He discriminated between his subjects on religious considerations, deprived the hindus of their civil liberties, reimposed *jaziya* on them, and did his utmost to harm their economic interests. According to an opinion,

> "Aurangzeb possessed neither the genius of Akbar nor the wisdom of Jahangir and Shah Jahan, who had by judicious government, made of the house of Timur a truly Indian dynasty which moghul and hindu alike were proud to serve. His insane lapse into the policy of the early turki and pathan conquerers struck at the very heart of the great national

edifice which had been called into being with so much circumspection by his predecessors."[42]

As a result of Aurangzeb's reactionary state policy, the socio-cultural progress of the country came to a grinding halt. The vastness of the empire coupled with the despotic rule of the mughals were the two potent factors which bespoke of its ultimate decline *albeit* Aurangzeb added to them a much more powerful element of religious bigotry which brought about the fall of the mighty mughal empire much earlier than expected. It became known to the world in November 1675 that Aurangzeb was not the just and impartial ruler of all the Indians when he ordered the execution of a saint, Guru Teg Bahadur, and his innocent associates on their refusal to embrace Islam. The climax was reached in April 1679 when he deprived all the hindus of their rights of citizenship by the imposition of *jaziya*. Aurangzeb lost the mandate to rule India when he ordered 'a vast multitude' of the unarmed, poor and destitute hindus of Delhi, seeking the abolition of *jaziya* and pleading for mercy, to be trampled under feet of the elephants. When Aurangzeb himself declared *jehad*—'holy war' upon the hindus, the latter had no other alternative but to take up to arms if they did not want to change their religion. The first signs of cracks in the imperial structure appeared in 1679-80 when the rajputs of Jodhpur took up arms under the leadership of Durga Dass Rathor and started a war of independence. They were soon joined in the struggle by the sisodias of Mewar. Their temporary suppression by the imperial troops, instead of dampening the spirit of the rajputs, set the whole of Rajasthan ablaze. So much so that prince Akbar, who was sent by Aurangzeb to crush the rajputs, himself felt disgusted with the antinational and suicidal policies of his father, and raised a standard of revolt in a bid to put the empire on the right track again. His failure marked the defeat of the forces of nationalism, liberalism and secular state policy at the hands of religious bigots and reactionary elements who had come to dominate the imperial court under Aurangzeb. The second major crack in the grand edifice of the Indian nation-state occurred in 1689 when Aurangzeb, by his inhuman and cruel treatment of Sambhaji, the son and successor of Shivaji, incurred the deep resentment of the marathas as a whole and turned them into the sworn enemies of the mughals. The people's war of independence that engulfed Maharashtra struck a serious blow to the solidarity and integrity of the mughal empire. The Deccan war proved very expensive and wasteful. Millions of people perished in the war-affected regions; according to an estimate, the loss of life in the imperial camp in the Deccan alone was about one *lakh* of men and three *lakhs* of animals, including horses, elephants, oxen and camels per year.'[43] The peasantry, which constituted the backbone of the country, was ruined. The village-folk 'suffered not only from violent capture, forced labour and starvation but also from

epidmics,[44] which broke out frequently in various parts of India in the last quarter of the seventeenth century. The incessant warfare emptied the state treasury; when the current revenues of the empire failed to meet the recurring expenditure on the war-front, Aurangzeb 'ordered the accumulated treasures of his ancestors from Akbar downwards to be taken out of the vaults of Agra and Delhi forts and sent to him in the Deccan.[45] Thus the last reserves of the empire were exhausted and once the richest state of the world actually ran bankrupt by the time of Aurangzeb's death. It left the provincial governments too poor to repair the public buildings, *sarais*, and roads, worn out and rendered unusable. The educational institutions, irrigation works and other public utility services broke down for want of funds. The absence of Aurangzeb from the imperial capital for quarter of a century (1681-1707) put the entire state machinery out of gear. The provincial governors became indolent and the bureaucracy tended to become more corrupt and oppressive than ever before. The honest and faithful governors emptied provincial treasuries to meet the imperial demands while the clever and ambitious ones secretly amassed wealth and strengthened their hold over the territories under their control so as to assert their independence at an appropriate occasion. In most of the provinces, law and order deteriorated, anti-social elements raised their ugly heads and created anarchy. Political unrest and insecurity of roads adversely affected trade and commerce ; as a result, no relief, either from state or from private sources, was possible to save the lives of the starving populace in the famine-hit areas. Thus the economic bankruptcy of the mughal empire and breakdown of its administration, coupled with the discontent of majority of its subjects rendered the grand edifice of the nation-state hollow from within; its foundations were eaten away by the *ficus religiosa*. Under the circumstances, the socio-cultural advancement of the country came to a stand-still.

Notes:

1. The word theocracy is derived from the Greek *theos*, meaning God; it implies 'a government or state, governed by God directly or through a sacerdotal class.' It envisages 'direct intervention and authority of God through revelation in government of society.'—*Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 1968 ed; p. 1344.

   Similarly, *Chamber's Twentieth Century Dictionary* (1950 ed; p. 1005) defines theocracy as 'that constitution of a state in which the Almighty is regarded as the sole sovereign, and the laws of the realm as divine commands rather than human ordinances—the priesthood necessarily becoming the officers of the invisible ruler'.
2. *BI'B* VI, p. 438.
3. *Politics in Pre-Mughal Times;* Kitabistan, Allahabad & London, 1938. p. 39.

4. derived from the word *salim*—'to resign or surrender oneself to the will, service and command of God; Islam, therefore, refers to the act of resigning oneself to the will of God; and muslim is one who professes Islam. The term was coined and applied by the Prophet to his newly founded religion.
5. U.N. Day, *Mughal Government*; Munshiram Manoharlal, p. 1.
6. *ibid.*
7. derived from *qurra*—'to read'; the title, therefore, means 'reading' or rather that which is to be read. The *Quran* contains the revelations which the Prophet Muhammad professed to have received from time to time, chiefly through the mediation of the angel Gabriel, which the Prophet delivered as a divine message to those about him; that is why it has been called the *Ilm-i-Allah* or 'the Word of God'. The *Quaran* contains 114 *suras* or chapters of unequal length.

   Sura is a Hebrew word which means a row or series of stones in a building structure or the steps; it also means a line in a book or letters; with application to the *Quran*, each *sura* represents, as it were, a distinct row or step in the building of the whole.
8. Refer to K.A. Wazami, *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India During the Thirteenth Century*; Asia, 1961, p. 110.
9. Halaku (Halagu) Khan, the renowned mongol chief, sacked Baghdad and put the Caliph Musta'sim Billah to death in 1258 A.D.
10. K.A. Nizami in Comp. HI, V, p. 281.
11. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*, *E&D* III, Indian reprint, Kitab Mahal, p. 100.
12. Even they were made to sit on ordinary seats, much lower than the royal throne.
13. Refer to Vol. I of this study, pp. 118-20.
14. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; p. 183.
15. *ibid*; p. 183.
16. Refer to Vol. I of this study, pp. 141-44.
17. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*; p. 185.
18. 'A muslim state' was said to be one which was either ruled by muslims or peopled by them.
19. The *Quran*; *sura* 9 (*Barat*), verse 29—trs. by Hashim Amir Ali, Charles E. Tuttle Company, Japan, 1974.
20. U. N. Day, *Administrative System of Delhi Sultanat* (1206-1413); Kitab Mahal, 1959, p. 88.
21. The *Quran*; sura 8, verses 38 & 39.
22. P.K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*; London, 5th ed ; 1953, p. 177.
23. The Umayyad Caliph Umar II discriminated against his christian subjects; they were excluded from all public offices. The first Abbasid Caliph, Saffah, was 'a narrow-minded bigot' who persecuted all the non-muslim subjects of his empire. Even the great Harun al Rashid, under the influence of orthodox *ulama*, felt obliged to deprive the christians of their socio-religious liberties. In 807 A.D., he issued an ordinance by which all churches 'in the border countries' were to be demolished and the non-muslims were to dress differently from muslims. In Africa, Ibrahim ibn Aghlab passed severe laws against the christians and the jews.—For details refer to K. D. Bhargava, *A Survey of Islamic Culture and Institutions*; Kitab Mahal, Allahabad, 1961, pp. 31-34.
24. A. B.M. Habibullah, *Foundation of Muslim Rule in India*; Allahabad, 2nd ed; 1961, p. 322.
25. A. L. Srivastava, *Medieval Indian Culture*; Shivalal Agarwala & Co; Agra, 1964, p. 5.
26. J.N. Sarkar in BVB VI, p. 618.

27. It is based on (i) the holy *Quran*, (ii) *Sunna* or *Hadis*—'the traditions of the Prophet', (iii) *Ijma*—unanimous agreement or consensus of opinion among the *mujtahidin*—'the great doctors of Islam'. The fourth source or foundation of the Islamic law is called the *Qias* which means 'measuring or reasoning by analogy of the learned doctors of Islam, the *mujtahidin*, with regard to certain difficult or doubtful questions of doctrine and practice, by comparing them with similar cases already settled by the authority of the *Quran*, *sunna* or *ijma*, thus arriving at the solution of the undecided question '—*The Dictionary of Islam* ; p. 198.
28. K. A. Nizami, Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India, *op. cit*; pp. 36-37.
29. BVB VI, p. 617.
30. Unlike the *shariat* which, being based on 'divine revelation' was not a secular law, the hindu law was based on human experience; it was synonymous with the centuries—old local customs and traditions of the people of the land; it prescribed absolutely no injunctions against the non-hindus.
31. N.V. Ramanayya, *The Third Dynasty of Vijayanagar*; University of Madras, 1935; p. 94.
32. K.S. Lal in *Medieval Indian State*; being the proceedings of a seminar on Medieval Indian State, held in March 1966 at the Punjab University, Chandigarh, p. 34.
33. For details refer to Tara Chand. *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*; Allahabad, 1946 ed; pp. 29-48.
34. K.S. Lal in *Medieval Indian State, op. cit*; pp. 36-37
35. *ibid*; p. 37.
36. The sultan of Turkey had similarly assumed the title of the *khalifa* in 1517 A.D.
37. H. Beveridge (trs. & ed.) *The Akbarnama*, by Abul Fazl Allami, 3 vols; *Bib. Indica*, Calcutta, (1902), Delhi Ess Ess reprint, II,p. 421.
38. *Ain i Akbari* by Abul Fazl Allami, trs. from the original Persian by H. Blochmann (Calcutta, 1867-77, 2 vols.), second edition, revised and edited by D.C. Phillott (1927), Oriental Books reprint, 1977, I, p. 2.
39. *Akbarnama*, II, p. 421.
40. *Ain i Akbari*, I, p. 3.
41. K.T. Shah, *The Splendour That Was India*; Bombay, 1932, p. 30.
42. Adolf Waley, *A Pageant of India* (1926); Indian reprint, Delhi, 1975, p. 474.
43. Niccolao Manucci, *Storia Do Mogor or Mogul India : 1653-1708*; trs. by William Irvine, 4 vols; London, 1907, IV, p. 96.
44. J.N. Sarkar, *History of Aurangzeb*; 5 vols; Calcutta, 1925, V, pp 439-41.
45. Manucci, *Storia, op. cit* ; II, p. 255.

Chapter 2

Pre-Muslim Indian Society

Rajput Civilisation – a Misnomer

We take the eleventh century to be the beginning of medieval age in India.[1] It lands us into the so-called *rajput period* of ancient Indian civilisation. The Indian society since the death of Harsha Vardhana to the muslim conquest of northern India has often been styled the *rajput civilisation* which is a misnomer. As a matter of fact, the rajputs constituted but a fraction of the Indian society. They cultivated and preserved some excellent socio-cultural traits of the remote past[2] and contributed what may be called the *rajput culture* to the ancient Indian civilisation, *albeit* the social virtues attributed to the rajputs were not universal. In the humble opinion of the author, these virtues were confined mostly to the ruling elite and upper strata of the society. Had the rajput chieftains and the socio-political and religious leadership of the country inspired respect and confidence among the masses, and the latter identified their interests with those of the feudal rajput states, the Indian society would not have collapsed like a house of cards in the face of foreign aggression. It could have reorganised itself and thrown up even better leadership to safeguard the national independence. It is, however, a part of history that the Indians, as a whole, put up a very poor show at the time of national catastrophe and failed to act as a well-knit, self-disciplined and mature society because of inherent defects in its socio-political organisation and internal weaknesses which had sapped its vitality and made it hollow from within. The apparent social stability and outward magnificence of the pre-muslim Indian society was simply deceptive.

Rajput Culture

This is not the place to discuss the various theories about the origin of the rajputs. The historians hold different views regarding their origin; one thing is, however, certain that they were of mixed origin. A number of rajput clans claimed their descent from *kshatriyas*; in some cases their claim was valid; the *kshatriyas* of ancient times could not have disappeared from

the Indian political and social scene all at once or even gradually. Some of the rajputs had sprung up from the aboriginal tribes and other castes of hindus, including the *brahmanas, vaishyas* and even the low-castes, whereas, quite a few of them were foreign immigrants, admitted into the fold of hindu society through Indianisation, formal conversion and purification as, for example, the four clans of *agnikula* rajputs—parmaras, pratiharas, chauhans and chalukyas. There had been '*kshatriya* tribes in Rajasthan before 750 A.D.; the *chavadas*, the *mauryas* and others'. However, they were gradually superseded by the emergence of new rajput clans of the Indianised foreigners who took up arms to defend their country of domicile against the fresh onslaughts on its borders by the *ghazis* of Islam. According to an opinion, 'the great event that brought about this change, pushing older *kshatriya* clans into the background' and putting the so-called *agnikula* rajputs 'into the forefront of a cultural and political battle, was the invasion of the country by the arabs.'[3] After the conquest of Sind and Multan in 712-13, the arabs made desperate attempts to reach the interior of the country; it were these Indianised foreigners—the *agnikula* rajputs, who repulsed the repeated attacks on Gujarat, Malwa and Rajasthan, and safeguarded Indian culture and freedom for a long time.[4] As suggested elsewhere in this study, the feudal lords and the ruling elite of the *rajput period*, though usually referred to as the rajputs by the subsequent writers, belonged actually to many an Indian race, caste, community or tribe. As a matter of fact, each of the feudal states, comprising the whole of its populace, was usually identified with its ruling clan, tribe or community which provided political-cum-military leadership and whose sole responsibility it was to safeguard the independence or the very existence of the feudal state. With the fall of a ruling house or the disintegration of a feudal state or principality, its erstwhile subjects, particularly the masses or sons of the soil, did not disappear. Most of them remained where they ever had been—in their own ancestral hearths and homes, in the same old villages; and they were very much attached to their agricultural lands. It made no difference to them whether the *parmaras* ruled at Delhi or the *chauhans* took over the reins of the government.

The rajput society proper was feudal in its organisational set up. It was split up into various clans, each under one or more hereditary ruling houses; over forty such clans, who acquired political ascendancy during that period, have drawn the treatment of the historians so far. All land was supposed to belong to the ruling chief, who parcelled it out among his lieutenants, usually styled as *thakurs*. The latter paid a fixed revenue or tribute and rendered military service (*olaga* or *chakari*) to the king in return for the lands granted to them. The village communities were governed by their *panchayats* and enjoyed considerable autonomy in their internal affairs; the villages constituted the self-contained, self-dependent and self-sufficient units of the Indian social order.

There was no written law of the land; the rajput states were run on local customs and traditions The feudal administrative set up was usually not very elaborate; in most cases, it was not efficient or stable either.

Virtues of Rajput Character

The rajputs were known for their undaunted courage and chivalry. They were honest, generous and hospitable, and kept their word. They were simple, outspoken and straightforward people who rejected outright the *machiavellian* principles of deceit and treachery in war. They were sometimes generous to a fault in their treatment of the vanquished foe. The rajputs were freedom-loving people with a keen sense of honour and self-respect. They constituted, in fact, 'the sword-arm of Hindustan'. They were great warriors who took to fighting as a sport and smilingly laid down their lives for the honour of their families, clan or the regional leader. The negative aspect of their excessively martial character has already been referred to in the introductory note to this study.

The rajput women enjoyed considerable freedom and respect in the society. They were known for their chastity and devotion to their husbands. There was no *purdah* system among them. They had some freedom in the selection of their husbands too; *swayam-var* was in vogue among the females of the ruling elite for this purpose. The custom of *sati* was prevalent though not insisted upon. Some of the rajput ladies were educated, and they took active part in public life. They did not lag behind their menfolk in bravery and heroism. Many of them participated in warfare and fought the enemy shoulder to shoulder with their menfolk. In time of danger, they displayed courage and fortitude which stands unparalleled in the history of the world. When their warriors were defeated or killed, the rajput ladies sacrificed their lives by burning themselves alive or committing suicides *en-mass* in manifold ways in order to safeguard their honour and self-respect; it was called the rite of *jauhar*.

Composition of the Hindu Society

The term *hindu* was used vaguely by the muslim immigrants with reference to all the inhabitants of India to which the epithet *kafir* (pagan or non-believer) was added for the purpose of their distinction from the muslims or the 'true-believers'; hence the phrase *hindu civilisation and culture* is synonymous with Indian Civilisation and Culture of the pre-muslim age for all intents and purposes. The hindus had developed a very complex social structure by the beginning of the eleventh century. They were a caste-ridden society. The four traditional castes, the *chatur varnas*, originally based on occupations, had become hereditary since the dawn of the Christian era. These had multiplied like hydraheads into numerous sub-castes and social groups, each standing in isolation from

the rest of the society. Toynbee refers to their caste system as 'a social enormity' which had disrupted its social unity. The various castes and sub-castes were divided into watertight compartments; they did not inter-marry nor share food with one another. People belonging to the same caste or sub-caste but living in different parts of the country gradually developed different social customs and manners, and ultimately, stopped inter-marrying or dining together. Similarly, people belonging to the high castes suffered from superiority complex; they looked down upon the low-castes and exercised discrimination against them. The multitude of the hindus, therefore, did not add to their social strength because they stood like a house divided against itself. 'The caste system,' in the words of R.C.Dutt, 'which unduly exalted the powers and privileges of priests, had the inevitable result degrading all honest trades and industries other than that of priests.....it served to divide the nation and create mutual ill-feeling; it degraded the nation in order to exalt the priests.'[5] The *brahmans* maintained their superiority over all other castes as ever before. The priestly class among them controlled the social life of the people; the multifarious social ceremonies and rituals through which a hindu had to pass from his birth till death, rather after his death too, had reduced him to the position of a captive in the grip of the priests. The *brahmans* claimed to be the champions of the entire intellectual and spiritul heritage of the land. They concentrated their attention on religion and spiritualism and did not show much interest in scientific studies nor guided the nation in the matter of industrial and technological advancement. The ancient *kshatriyas* had assumed the title of rajputs while most of the ancient *vaishyas* had given up agriculture and taken to trade and commerce. Alberuni observes that '*vaishyas*—the great body of the aryan people', were also 'fast degenerating to the rank of *sudras*.' At one place in his narrative we are told that is not very great distance' between the *vaishyas* and the *sudras*; elsewhere we are informed that the *vaishyas* had already been deprived of their ancient heritage of religious education, that the *brahmans* taught *Vedas* to the *kshatriyas albeit* 'the *vaishya* and *sudra* are not allowed to hear it'. At yet another place, Alberuni remarks that 'every action which is considered as the privilege of the *brahman*, such as saying prayers, the recitation of the *Veda*, and offering sacrifices to the fire, is forbidden to him, to such a degree that when a *sudra* or a *vaishya* is proved to have recited the *Veda*, he is accused by the *brahmans* before the ruler, and the latter will order his tongue to be cut off.'[6]

The *sudras* continued to render menial services to the higher castes though many of them had adopted agricultural tenancy and artisans' craft. The untouchables lived outside the towns and the villages. Most of the people were poor, backward and ignorant of education and learning; they constituted the masses. Having been neglected by the higher castes since ages, they felt demoralised and dejected. They suffered from many social and economic

disabilities which made their lives miserable. When the ex-buddhists reverted back to the fol of Hindusm, they became the unprivileged masses for whom separate sub-castes of the lower order came into being. The upper classes made their caste structure more rigid so as to prevent their entry into the higher social structure. Even the artisans' professions came to be treated as separate sub-castes of lower denominations, like the weavers, iron-smiths and oil-men, etc. All said and written about the glorious civilisation and culture of per-muslim India, a nation which downgraded the peasants and producers of national wealth, humiliated and exploited its own working people, and looked down upon the hands who fed it, could no longer boast of its greatness whatever its accomplishments in the fields of religion and philosophy, sciences and arts, education and literature, and the much-publicised ethics and refined cultural values. It was doomed to go down in history sooner or later as a degenerate social order and there was nothing surprising that it was knocked down and levelled to the ground by the rising tide of Islam. The rigidity of the caste system made it difficult for an outsider to be absorbed in the hindu society whose growth came practically to a standstill. The ruling elite and orthodox *brahmans* shut themselves into the ivory towers of caste system and were cut off from the mainstream of the society or the masses. They failed to provide political, social or true spiritual guidance to the latter. Accordingly, the masses lost interest in the dynastic feuds or rise and fall of the rajput states. No wonder, more than half of the hindu populace stood forth as mere spectators when the rajput rulers had to fight a life and death struggle against the turkish invaders. Their social vision had become so narrow that they did not consider themselves responsible for the defence of their own hearths and homes.

As mentioned earlier, the ladies of the ruling elite, particularly, the rajputs, enjoyed social freedom but this was not the case with the common womenfolk; their condition was not satisfactory. They were mostly confined to the four walls of the houses and depended almost exclusively on their male earning members. The evils of child marriage and infanticide were prevalent. Polygamy was recognised though it was confined to the upper classes because of economic considerations. Widow re-marriage was not encouraged which made their lives miserable and added to the burden of the society in general. Alberuni records:

> "Hindus marry at a very young age.....if a wife loses husband by death, she cannot marry another man. She has only to choose between two things—either to remain a widow as long as she lives, or to burn herself; and the latter eventually is considered the preferable, because, as a widow, she is ill-treated as long as she lives."[7]

Religious Beliefs and Practices

Hinduism, was the predominant religion in one or the other of its forms, of the pre-muslim Indian society. There was a sprinkling of the *parsees* along the western coast who, though 'a people apart,' lived in perfect harmony with their hindu neighbours. Buddhism was at a discount with the rajputs; the buddhist masses in northern and central India were gradually being assimilated within the fold of hindu society. Nevertheless, the population of Bihar and Bengal was found to be predominantly buddhist even in the beginning of the thirteenth century when the turks penetrated therein. The rajputs were devout hindus; they worshipped various mythical gods and goddesses, particularly, *vishnu, Siva* and *Durga* or *Sakti*. Alberuni writes in detail about the religious beliefs and practices of the hindus. He refers to the multitude of gods and goddesses whom they worshipped; nevertheless, he does not find difficulty in making out the three principal deities of the hindus—*Brahma* the Creator, *Vishnu* the Preserver, and *Siva* or *Mahesa* the Destroyer, who collectively formed a *Unity* or the *Trinity*. He says that in this respect, 'there is an analogy between hindus and christians, as the latter distinguish between the three persons, and give them three separate names—Father, Son and Holy Ghost, but unite them into one substance.'[8] That Alberuni had carefully studied the hindu scriptures and understood correctly their religious philosophy and institutions is demonstrated by him in his references to the doctrine of monotheism as given by the *Upanishads*. He informs us that 'the multitude of gods is for vulgar belief; the educated hindus believe God to be one, eternal, without beginning and end, acting by free will, almighty, all-wise living, giving life, ruling, and preserving. The existence of God, they (hindus) consider as real existence, because everything that exists, exists through Him.'[9] Alberuni had also learnt all about the hindu concept of 'transmigration of soul', of 'every act in life, bringing its reward or punishment in the life to come', and of 'final emancipation derived by true knowledge'; he observes that, after the attainment of true knowledge, 'the soul turns away from matter, the connecting links are broken, the union is dissolved. Separation and dissolution take place, and the soul returns to its home, carrying with itself as much of the bliss of knowledge as *sesame* develops grains and blossoms afterwards never separating from its oil. The intelligent being, intelligence, and its object are united and become one.'[10]

The religious beliefs and practices of the hindus and buddhists showed a marked degeneration. The priestly class among the brahmans exploited the people in the name of religion; *devadasi* system in the temples was fraught with manifold social evils The tantric philosophy of mysticism which had found its entry in the hindu and buddhist theology as far back as the sixth century, had started showing its ugly results. It encouraged all sorts of superstitions and blind practices through which the crooks, in the garb of spiritual guides, robbed the poor and ignorant masses. The

exponents of *vammarga dharma* indulged in 'wine, flesh and women.' The vicious ideas of this cult had permeated the educational institutions too; they produced abscure literature on prostitutes and pimps which, instead of generating the reformative forces, justified and encouraged evil practices among the educated. *Guhya samaja* regarded as an important work on the buddhist tantrics, refers to Mahatma Buddha as 'indulging in acts of debauchery with the angels.' The famous *yoga* system of philosophy had 'degenerated into various strange practices by which supernatural powers, it was believed, could be obtained.' A branch of literature known as the *tantras* - 'the creations of the last period of hindu degeneracy' gives us the obnoxious 'accounts of dark, cruel, and obscene practices for the acquisition of supernatural powers.' In his observations on the tantric literature, R C Dutt remarks:

> "ignorance is credulous, and feebleness hankers after power. And when a superstitious ignorance and a senile feebleness had reached their last stage of degeneracy, men sought by unwholesome practices and unholy rites to acquire that power which providence has rendered attainable only by a fire and healthy exercise of our faculties - moral, intellectual, and physical To the historian, the *tantra* literature represents, not a special phase of hindu thought, but a diseased form of the human mind, which is possible only when the national life has departed, when all political cousciousness has vanished and the lamp of knowledge is extinct."[11]

Indian art and architecture was also adversely affected by the religious and moral degeneration of the socio-political leadership. The cult of *bhakti*, born in the south in the eighth century, had made its appearance in the north but it had not yet shown tangible results in curing the socio-religious ills of the country.

Development of Hindu Sciences

Alberuni tells us about the rich scientific knowledge and literature possessed by the hindus of his age. He makes a special mention of the physical sciences, including biology, physics, astronomy and medicine, which were in a fairly advanced stage of development. On the basis of intensive research in the socio-cultural condition of India on the eve of the turkish invasions, Mohammad Habib observes :

> "Though the India of the eleventh century had fallen far from the cultural standards of the era of Harsha, not to mention the Golden Age of the Guptas, it may be safely affirmed that no single country, even in that age, with the possible exception of Persia, could boast of a finer culture. But while in Persia, the culture of the Achaemenian and the Sassanian periods had entirely perished, India had, inspite of foreign invasions and

internal wars, preserved the continuity of her traditions. The researches of Alberuni prove beyond doubt that hindu philosophy and science, though not so progressive as in the preceding centuries, were living and vital. Even a solitary scholar, like Alberuni, could collect the material necessary for reconstructing the metaphysical and scientific achievements of the past.''[12]

Alberuni brings home to us that 'the number of hindu sciences is great but the science of astronomy is the most famous and the most cherished of all. Astronomical literature consists of the *siddhantas* called *Sind-Hind* by the muslims... ...The *siddhantas* are derived from the book *Pitamaha*—so called from the first father, i.e.; Brahman of the five *siddhantas*, enumerated by him.'[13] It is said that an Indian astronomer was invited by the Caliph Al-Mansur to give instruction in Indian astronomy. The Indian system was then adopted by the arabs and the name *Sind-Hind* was given to one of the Indian works, which appears to have been Brahmagupta's *Siddhanta*. This work, by command of the Caliph, was used as a guide by the arabs in matters pertaining to the stars.[14] Mathematics, which forms a basis for the advancement of all the physical sciences, was highly developed in India. 'The hindus, unlike other nations, go beyond the thousand in their arithmetical terms,' thus records Alberuni, 'According to some *bhuri* or the nineteenth order is the limit of reckoning while according to others the *koti*.'[15] The Indians were the first to realise the significance of *zero* in calculations, they invented the decimal system, and were far advanced 'in numerical notations:' their knowledge of mensuration was also 'remarkable'. In the words of Alberuni, the hindus 'hold that the circumference of a circle is thrice its diameter, but, according to Brahmgupta, $3\frac{1}{7}$ times the diameter.'[16] Cosmology was an important branch of hindu sciences; they enumerated the planets, studied the motions of the earth, moon and other planets, and observed very minutely the astronomical phenomena for the purpose of computing time and perfecting their calendars. They had derived accurate rules and tables 'for the calculation of the various phases of lunar and solar eclipses, and the times of beginning, middle and end as set forth in their various astronomical works, chiefly the *Surya Siddhanta*.'[17] There is, however, substance in the argument of Mohammad Habib that 'this glorious heritage was not the heritage of the Indian people but only of a very small section of the bourgeois classes. The overwhelming mass of the people were intentionally, purposely, and maliciously left to wallow in degrading superstitions by the pre-concerted tricks of the priests.'[18]

Socio-Cultural Values and Attitudes

The hindus displayed conservatism and narrowmindedness in their general outlook. Alberuni complains that they suffered from

some sort of superiority complex with reference to their social attainments and cultural values; he writes :

> ".....folly is an illness for which there is no medicine, and the hindus believe that there is no country but theirs, no nation like theirs, no kings like theirs, no science like theirs. They are haughty, foolishly vain, self-conceited and stolid. They are by nature niggardiy in communicating that which they knew, and they take the greatest possible care to withhold it from men of another caste among their own people, still much more, of course, from any foreigners."[19]

The fact which struck Alberuni most unfavourably with regard to the hindus was their total isolation from the other nations and their ignorance of the outside world. According to him, the hindus shunned everything that was alien, dubbed all foreigners as the *mlechhas* and observed total social boycott against them 'be it by inter-marriage or by sitting, eating and drinking with them,' because, thereby, they thought 'they would be polluted.'[20] There is substance in what he says about the Indian attitude; it might have partly been borne because of the barbarities perpetrated by the turkish hordes of Mahmud of Ghazni on the unarmed and innocent populace, plunder of their hearths and homes and desecration of their holy shrines. Alberuni was also conscious of this fact and he condemns the destructive activities of Mahmud of Ghazni in the following words :

> "Mahmud utterly ruined the prosperity of the country, and performed those wonderful exploits by which the hindus became like atoms of dust scattered in all directions, and like a tale of old in the mouths of the people. Their scattered remains cherish, of course, the most inveterate aversion towards all muslims. This is the reason, too, why hindu sciences have retired far away from those parts of the country conquered by us, and have fled to places which our hand cannot yet reach, to Kashmir, Benares, and other places."[21]

There is, however, no denying the fact that the hindus, partly because of their long isolation from the outside world, suffered from ignorance about the developments in foreign countries and hence failed to appreciate the virtues of other peoples. Owing to the peculiar restrictions of the caste system, even foreign travel had become a taboo with them. Alberuni suggests that 'if they (the hindus) travelled and mixed with other nations, they would soon change their mind, for their ancestors were not as narrowminded as the present generation is.'[22] Obviously, the ancient Indian civilisation had lost its innate power of absorption by which it assimilated the best in the various peoples who came into contact with it in the earlier ages. Alberuni tells us that the hindus of the

early eleventh century were not even interested in setting their house in order. They never desired to recover or purify a thing once 'polluted' by a foreign touch: they were not allowed by their socio-political leaders 'to receive anybody who does not belong to them, even if he wished to, or was inclined to their religion.'[23] Evidently, it rendered any social connection with them rather difficult; it created a gulf between them and the muslim invaders who deprived them of their independence. Mohammad Habib gives a very refreshing analysis of Alberuni's observations on the conservative attitude of the hindus; he writes :

> "The unity of Hinduism, if we view it rightly, does not lie in its dogmas or its social system, but in its historic continuity as a civilisation, and in the processes by which its philosophy, art and science have been evolved. The insularity for which Alberuni blames the hindus was quite distinct from the fanaticism of religious bigots; it was not the principles of Islam they disliked but the manners and customs of the mussalmans. They were not anxious to convert, and it was contamination rather than conversion which they resented most. While tolerant of the greatest religious differences amongt themselves, Alberuni found them hostile to all foreigners.....It was not, in other words, a conflict of religious beliefs but of civilisation and culture. A foreigner could no more become a hindu (viz ; an Indian) in the tenth century than an Asiatic can become a European today even if he wished it or was inclined to their religion."[24]

According to yet another mature observation by R.C. Dutt,

> "India of the tenth and eieventh centuries resembled the *middle ages* in Europe in many respects. A noble religion had become the monopoly of priests, and had been all but smothered with childish legends and image worship. War and sovereignty were the monopoly of another caste, the *rajput kshatriyas* of India, and the feudal barons of Europe, who had both come to the forefront from the struggles of the preceding Dark Ages. The people were ignorant, dispirited, enslaved, in one country as in the other. The last of the poets of the Augustan and Vikramadityan ages had disappeared, and had left no successors. The great names in science and learning were also a memory of the past; none had appeared again to take their place. And, as if to make the parallel complete, the last remains of the Latin and Prakrit—Sanskrit spoken tongues, were replaced by modern languages—the Italian, French and Spanish in Europe, and the Hindi, etc; in India. The people were kept in ignorance, fed with unwholesome superstition, beguiled with gorgeous and never-ending festivals. Everything bore the appearance of disintegration and decay; and national life seemed extinct."[25]

"But here," writes the learned scholar "the parallel ends. The sturdy feudal barons of Europe soon mixed with the people, fought the people's battles in the field, the council board or the counting house, and thus infused a new and vigorous life in modern nations. In India, the *rajput kshatriyas*, isolated from the people, soon fell a prey to foreign invaders, and were involved in a common ruin."[26]

Indian Economy

India, on the eve of the turkish invasion, was known to be a rich country among its neighbours. Gold, silver and the precious stones, accumulated in the hindu temples and the treasuries of the rajput princes, tempted Mahmud of Ghazni more than anything else to launch incessant expeditions to this country. The Indian economy, so far as its agricultural and mineral wealth was concerned, was quite sound ; there was general economic prosperity. Agriculture, which constituted the backbone of the national economy, was fairly developed, and the land produced enough and to spare. The ruling elite were rich and affluent ; the merchant princes (*saudagars*) rolled in wealth. We have, however, reasons to believe that there existed great disparity of wealth between the upper classes and the masses, but it was not something unusual about the Indian society of the medieval age. The villagers who constituted the bulk of the nation, lived simple and frugal lives ; their standard of living was very low. We cannot say with certainty if they were better off or worse than what they are today. Bonded labour was prevalent among the agricultural classes and slavery was practised by the urban hindus, though on a domestic level; these practices bore no comparison with the elaborate system of slavery brought by the muslim invaders to India.

Trade and commerce was well developed but the currency circulation was minimal because of very low prices. The use of gold and silver was confined to the commercial transactions at the higher level ; the masses traded commodities through barter system or its near equivalent. On the whole, India presented the case of a rich country with poor masses and still poorer defence. Its fabulous wealth, weak political structure and 'petrified society' extended an open invitation to the turks to lay their hands on its poorly defended treasures. It was, therefore, not surprising that Mahmud of Ghazni came, he saw, and he plundered.

Notes :

1. As emphasised by the author in the first volume of this study, 'the medieval period of Indian history does not correspond exactly with the *middle age* of Europe, also dubbed as 'the dark age' of the western civilisation; according to one definition, it covered a period between 476 and 1500 A.D.; from the

breakdown of the Roman empire in the west to the beginning of Renaissance and the Reformation. These dates cannot be taken up as a working hypothesis either for the beginning or conclusion of the medieval Indian period.'—*Advanced Study in the History of Medieval India*; Vol. I Sterling, 1979, p. ix.

2. Allusion is to 'the epic age' of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata.*
3. Dasharath Sharma, *Lectures on Rajput History and Culture*; Motilal Banarsidass, 1970, p. 10.
4. "In Rajasthan, the Jalor Chalukya Nagabhata (I) led almost a national crusade against the arab aggressors in which he was joined by many brave rajput clans like the Chauhans, the Guhilas and the Parmaras; and suceess crowned their efforts to such an extent that not only did they free Rajasthan from these intruders (the arabs) but insured, for centuries, the cultural integrity and safety of Madhyadesa."—*ibid* ; p. 11.

   The territories around Kanauj were known to the people as *Madhyadesa*—'the heart or centre of India' ever since the days of Harsha who had established his seat of imperial government at Kanauj (the auother).
5. *Later Hindu Civilisation* (500-1200 A.D.): (First published, London, 1888), Indian reprint, Calcutta, 5th ed ; 1965, p. 85.
6. Alberuni's India (Sachau), *op. cit*; chs. 9, 12 & 54.
7. *Alberuni's India* (Sachau), ch. 59.
8. *ibid* ; ch. 8.
9. *ibid* ; ch. 2.
10. *ibid* ; ch. 5.
11. Later Hindu Civilisation ; *op. cit* ; p. 80.
12. K.A. Nizami (ed.), *Politics and Society During the Early Medieval Period* ; "Collected Works of Professor Mohammad Habib ; Vol. I, Peopl's Publishing House, 1974, p 176.
13. Alberuni's India (Sachau), I, pp. 15-58.
14. W. Brennand (author of *Hindu Astronomy*) quoted in Collected Works of Mohammad Habib ; *op. cit* ; I, p. 170,
15. Alberuni's India (Sachau), I, pp. 174-76.
16. *ibib* ; p. 138.
17. *ibid* ; p. 225
18. Collected Works of M. Habib, *op. cit* ; p. 176.
19. Alberuni's India (Sachau), I, p. 22.
20. *ibid* ; p. 17.
21. Alberuni's India (Sachau), I, ch 1.
22. *ibid* ; p. 22.
23. ibid ; p. 20.
24. Collected Works *op. cit* ; pp. 138-39.
25. Later Hinda Civilisation ; *op. cit* ; pp. 185-86.
26. *ibid* ; p. 186.

Chapter 3

Emergence of Muslims as a Social Factor

1: Early Muslim Settlements in India

Early Arabs and Pre-Muslim India

India had commercial as well as socio-cultural relationships with the West-Asian countries and Europe long before the rise of Islam; the arabs served as the connecting link between India and the outside world in this regard. The Indian merchants freely employed the arab sailors, commercial agents and workers in the business establishments along the Indian sea-coast and the Persian Gulf countries, while the Persian merchant ships and the camel *caravans* of arab *saudagars* carried merchandise across the Arabian sea and the desert to and from the Mediterranean. Obviously, a large number of arabs, who were involved in the Indian trade and commerce, had made their settlements along the western sea-coast of India before their conversion to Islam. The Indian exports to the western countries comprised spices, cotton and silk fabrics of manifold colours and rich varieties, elephants' tusks, ivory works, precious stones, indigo, sugar and other food stuffs. There are reasons to believe that the arabs had also played a significant role in the spread of Indian culture to the western countries in the remote past. The Indian sciences, philosophy and literature were not only known to the west but also 'highly valued' in the Persian Gulf countries and the Arabian peninsula. The *Panchtantra* literature—a collection ef fables containing wise maxims which give a glimpse of the ancient Indian ethics and moral code, had been translated into Persian and Arabic languages in the sixth century of the Christian era. Its Persian translation was prepared in the reign of Khusrau I, styled Naushirvan (c. 531—79 A.D.), which was, in turn, rendered into Arabic soon afterwards. The Arabic translation of the *Panchtantra* made it well-known all over the western world.[1] Max Mueller has it that the transmission of the *Panchtantra* literature to the west 'is more wonderful and instructive

than the stories contained in it.'[2] Hitti opines that the world-famous *Thousand And One Arabian Nights* was based upon several stories of Indian origin as they found their way to the Arabian peninsula through the *Panchtantra* literature.[3] Similarly, Firdausi, the author of *Shahnama*, tells us that the ambassadors from 'a sovereign of Hind' visited the court of the Persian monarch Khusrau I and presented him with a *shatranj*[4] or chess-board and asked his courtiers 'to solve the secrets of the game.' The indoor game was thus carried from India to Persia and from thence found its way to the Arabian peninsula sometime in the seventh century; it were the arabs who, directly or indirectly, carried the game to various parts of Europe.[5]

Impact of Indian Culture on Arabs

After their conversion to Islam, the arabs cast their covetous eyes on the rich seaports of western India and made a number of abortive attempts to establish their foothold there. In the long run, their efforts bore fruit in the conquest of Siestan, Sind and Multan *albeit* they failed to cash in on their military victories. All the subsequent attempts of the arab chiefs to expand their territorial possessions and penetrate into the heart of the country were foiled by the Indian princes. Soon after, the victors themselves were cut off from the mainstream of 'the Islamic world'. They gradually shed their religious zeal, settled down as petty feudal chieftains and came to terms with their Indian subjects. The arab principalities thus assumed the general pattern of Indian feudal polity with the only difference that their rulers happened to possess a new religious faith of extraneous origin. The arabs could neither make Islam 'a political force' in India nor could they present it as a socio-cultural factor to reckon with. Instead, they were deeply influenced by the Indian culture and high moral character of the hindus and buddhists; they constituted majority of their subjects who had stubbornly refused to embrace Islam through persuasion or force. Heavily outnumbered by their non-muslim subjects, the arab rulers of Sind depended for their very survival on the cooperation and goodwill of the former, whom they had to employ in the administration of their territories as a matter of political exigency. It led to the establishment of cordial relationships between the rulers and the ruled, and paved the way for the ultimate cultural victory of the vanquished over their new masters. The latter were gradually Indianised by the *brahman* scholars and *buddhist* sages who began to educate the arab ruling elite and their wards in Indian languages, literature, philosophy, astronomy, mathematics, medicine and other sciences. When the arabs established their foothold in India, Islamic culture was in its formative stage, the broad elements of which could not even roughly be defined; with the passage of time, however, they did become the cultural ambassadors of India to 'the muslim world.' It would not, therefore, be wrong to say that the ancient Indian culture did play a significant role in feeding and nourishing the Islamic culture in its days of infancy.

Early Muslim Settlements in India

The arab conquest of Siestan, Sind and Multan planted the banner of Islam on the Indian soil though the new faith was confined, at its initial stage, to a handful of tne foreign immigrants and a few thousands of the Indians who had forcibly been converted to Islam during the period of the war. It was a general practice with the muslim armies of invasion to enslave the prisoners of war and all those, particularly the women, who fell into their hands in the heat of the fury. These unfortunate people were compelled to embrace Islam. They were kept or sold as slaves because slavery was not only recognised as a legal institution but also practised on a commercial scale by the muslim invaders. The natural biological urge of the victors was to lay their hands freely on the hapless women of the vanquished who enabled them to settle down as family men. Thus they formed the nucleus of early muslim settlements in India.

To begin with, the arab governors of Sind adopted a deliberate policy of conversions from among the sons of the soil with a view to increasing the number of 'the faithful' and making Islam 'a dominant force' in their newly conquered dominions; it was almost a universal feature of the Islamic polity in those days. The hindus were induced to embrace Islam 'because they were offered better political status and material prospects in the society although majority of them resisted this temptation and offered a dogged resistance to the policy of forced conversions. This disheartened the arab governors. Therefore, by the time they set up as *de facto* rulers and untagged their principalities from the empire of the caliph, they had shed much of their religious fanaticism and zeal for the propagation of Islam. Thereafter, many an Indian embraced Islam voluntarily because it preached the gospel of monotheism, practised universal brotherhood and secured socio-economic freedom to the low-caste hindus from exploitation at the hands of their high-cast fellow-brethern. All these factors helped in the slow but steady increase of the muslim population in the territories under their control.

The arabs made settlements on the Malabar coast, converted a local hindu chieftain to Islam and established a foothold there long before the armies of Alauddin Khalji penetrated into the Deccan. Islam being a missionary faith, the muslims of all ranks expressed their jubilation whenever 'a heathen' shed idolatory to join their community. Their political and military leaders having failed to penetrate into the heart of India through force, the muslim saints and the bearded *mullas* 'in their long skirted tunics' made their appearance gradually in the Indo-Gangetic valley, then ruled over by the powerful hindu chieftains, and mixed up freely with the hindu masses, particularly the low-castes, including 'untouchables' and 'chandalas' who lived outside the walled towns. It provided a golden opportunity to the muslim missionaries to establish their

strongholds among the poor and the oppressed hindu masses. Therefore, the contention of some of the modern writers is correct that muslim settlements had come into existence in the heart of India, including modern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, probably before the invasions of Mahmud of Ghazni, and definitely before the military conquest of northern India by Muhammad Ghori and his generals in the last quarter of the twelfth century[6]. The frequent use of the term *turushka* or *turuska-danda* in the rajput polity of the ninth and tenth centuries gives credence to this contention; the term has variously been defined as 'a sort of tax levied on the muslim settlers in the rajput dominions', or the one 'imposed on Indian subjects by their hindu chieftains to raise money with a view to fighting the muslim invaders. The invasions of Mahmud of Ghazni were accompanied by the forced conversions of hindus to Islam in various parts of the country ravaged by his armies. Mahmud was gone but the hindu converts to Islam, however small their number, must have stayed behind in their country of birth. The hindu masses, in general, tolerated the existence of the neo-muslims in their midst while the rajput rulers, in spite of their perpetual warfare with the muslim armies of aggression, adopted, by and large a very liberal policy towards the muslim settlers within their dominions. Ibn i Asir records that there was a colony of the *musalmans* at Banaras who had lived there since the days of Mahmud of Ghazni and had continued to be 'faithful to the law of Islam and constant in prayer and good work'.[7] Barani refers to a mausoleum of Sayyad Salar Masud Ghazi at Bahraich;[8] he was said to be a soldier in the army of Mahmud who had fallen fighting 'the infidels'. "The fact," writes K. A. Nizami, "that his name and his grave survived through the long years between the Ghaznavid invasions and the Ghurid occupation of northern India, shows that there was some muslim population to look after the grave to preserve for posterity the tradition of the Salar's martyrdom."[9] Sheikh Muinuddin, the founder of the *Chishti silsila* of the *sufis* in India, came from central Asia before the second battle of Tarain and set up his *khanqah* at Ajmer for the peaceful propagation of Islam. Obviously, it must have been made possible only by the broad-mindedness and generosity of Prithvi Raj Chauhan, the heroic defender of Delhi who perished in the deadly struggle against Muhammad Ghori. The Khwaja was not only respected by the hindus but also allowed to make converts to Islam; he married two wives, one of whom was said to be his hindu disciple who voluntarily embraced Islam in the metropolis of the powerful Chauhan state. K. A. Nizami makes a very interesting and intelligent observation that, apart from the general policy of religious toleration and friendly attitude displayed by the rajput chieftains and hindu population towards thc handful of muslim settlers in their midst, economic and commercial interests of the Indians were also responsible for the set up of early muslim colonies in the Gangetic valley. To elaborate the point Nizami writes:

"The circumstances under which these muslim colonies came to be established in India may be briefly indicated. India's trade contacts with foreign lands date back to the Indus Valley Civilisation, if not earlier. India produced certain commodities, like sugar, cotton, colouring material, in particular indigo (*nil*) and *katha* which the colder climes desperately needed, and foreign merchants were in a position to pay higher price for them than the Indian consumer. India, on the other hand, needed foreign commodities—horses of good breed, dried fruits, precious stones of various types (the ruby of Badakshan and the turquoise of Persia). A well-equipped warrior of the early middle ages, if we are to trust Persian literature of the period, had to provide himself with an Indian sword, a Persian bow, and a Tatar lance. The self-imposed dogmas of hindus, which we find in the *Manusmriti* and similar works, order the high-caste hindu to confine himself to the region where the *munja* gross grows and the black gazelles graze; and he is not to cross the sea or to go to countries where non-caste people govern; the lowest group of non-castes, according to the *Manusmriti*, are the yavanas, pehlavas, and turushkas (Greeks, Persians and Turks). How the expansive character of Hinduism of the earlier centuries was changed into insularity by the time of the *smrities* does not concern us here. But the presence of the arab traders in all parts of India (except Kashmir) and the complete absence of the hindu trader from Persia and central Asia prove that the mandate of the *smrities* was effective and that the hindu commercial classes, so efficient in their works throughout the middle ages, had to leave that export and import trade of India to foreigners."[10]

2: Era of Conflict Between the Two Cultures

Turkish Invasions under Mahmud of Ghazni

Almost three centuries after the arab conquest of Sind, Mahmud of Ghazni, son of Subuktagin, ascended the throne in 998 A.D.; with a vow that he would wage jihad—'holy war' on the kafirs-'infidels', and organise annual expeditions into India, 'the land of idolators'. With the blessings of the Caliph of Baghdad, who bestowed on him the titles of *amin ul millat*- 'protector of the muslims', and *yamin ud daulah*—'the righthand man of the caliph', Mahmud led seventeen expeditions into India from 1000 to 1027, and carried fire and sword wherever he went. The number and frequency of his raids throws light on the tireless energy, ambition and fixity of purpose of the invader. He left Ghazni generally at the end of the Indian rainy season, in September-October, and spent the winter here which was not as cold as in Afghanistan. He returned to Ghazni in March-April, before the beginning of the next rainy season, laden with every type of booty, including gold, silver,

precious stones; horses, elephants men and women as slaves and all that he and his marauders could carry with them. Having acquired full knowledge of the climate and topography of India, he usually tried to avoid the scorching heat of the northern plains, and, particularly, the rains which blocked the passage of the armies.

Objects of Mahmud's Invasions

Mahmud of Ghazni was a great warrior and a born leader of men; he had an imperialistic instinct though he cannot be called an empire-builder. He acquired vast territorial possessions *albeit* it was not his aim to establish his sway over India. That is why his campaigns were usually directed against big towns and rich temples. He did not attack military installations and well-defended forts unless it became impossible to avoid them. After the conquest of Mathura and Kanauj, northern India lay at his feet but he lacked the acumen to bring it under his permanent control. The defeated Indian princes acknowledged him sometimes as their overlord and held out promises to pay the annual tribute but none took it seriously—neither the victor nor the vanquished.

Mahmud annexed Punjab, including Lahore and Multan, to the empire of Ghazni as a matter of expediency. It protected the lines of communication and facilitated the movement of his armies into the heart of India for plundering raids. The very fact that Lahore was annexed by him rather very late (1021-22) after more than two decades of his successful military career, mitigates against the imperial motives of Mahmud.

Mahmud's declared objective in carrying out repeated raids into India was the propagation and glorification of Islam. It could not be achieved by the way he and his camp followers behaved towards the Indian populace while on plundering sprees. Most of his expeditions were in the nature of highway robberies wherein he outdid the barbarians in the display of vandalism towards the vanquished. A few modern historiographers have advanced the argument that Mahmud needed a lot of money to raise the army for the expansion of a vast central Asian empire; we do not agree with them. It was not a needy man looking for money in the holy shrines; Mahmud was a greedy man who lived for money and died for it. The base elements of greed for the precious metal and the temptation to destroy the grand edifice of a civilised society could bring no credit to him or to his creed[11]. Of course, he knew it well that by raising the cry of *jihad* against 'the infidels', he would muster a large number of recruits from all over the muslim world, willing to join him as *ghazis* or volunteers in his expeditions. His attacks on hindu temples served both the purposes—acquisition of wealth and fame as idol-breaker.

Effects of Mahmud's Invasions

Indian invasions of Mahmud shook the entire socio-political fabric of northern and western parts of the country. The Hindushahis, the heroic defenders of the Punjab and the northwestern frontier, perished in the struggle against the invaders, and Khyber pass, the Gateway of India, was lost to the foreigners for ever. The powerful and proud rajput princes were defeated, humiliated or liquidated, resulting in the disinegration of their states. The political division and disunity of the country was exposed. The defective military structure and poor leadership took a heavy toll of the martial talent; thousands of brave fighters laid down their lives in battlefield, those who survived felt thoroughly humiliated and demoralised. The citizens were massacred in cold blood by the marauders who took thousands with them as slaves, to be sold in the markets of Baghdad, Samarkand and Bukhara. Flourishing cities were laid waste ; magnificent temples were desecrated and plundered; and the centuries-old edifices of art, architecture and culture were ruined. The entire habitats were razed to the ground and millions of people rendered homeless ond hearthless while within their own country. Quite a few were forcibly converted to Islam. Long after the departure of Mahmud, northern India must have presented the picture of a vast refugee camp. The problems of resettlement of the uprooted people must have baffled the petty chieftains who lacked moral courage, resources and foresight to help their subjects. One shudders to think of the sad plight of the unfortunate Indians of those days who did not have the benefit of a country-wide national government to look after their interests and soothe their injured sentiments. A whole civilisation was fatally wounded and left bleeding. The country witnessed a dreadful holocaust in the Ghaznavid invasions; Mahmud and his turkish marauders were universally condemned as the *mlechhas* by the hindus, as per the testimony of Alberuni, because of their inhuman conduct and the barbarities committed by them on the unarmed and hapless citizens, including women and children.

The Second Holocaust

The country got respite for over a century and a quarter (1030-1175) from foreign invasions after the death of Mahmud of Ghazni; it provided a golden opportunity to the hindus to reorganise their socio-political structure on a sound footing. The rajput princes and other regional rulers were given a chance to *rally* and be prepared to defend their freedom against future onslaughts ; more than enough time was thus allowed to the Indians to shed their regional outlook and set their house in order on national considerations. That seemed to be the only way to safeguard their national independence and protect their civilisation and culture. This was, however, not to be. The Indian socio-political leadership failed to rise to the occasion ; they learnt nothing from the humiliation suffered at the hands of Mahmud of Ghazni nor forgot

anything about their traditional caste prejudices, and other divisive and self-destructive tendencies. Once again, they exhibited a lack of creativity in tackling the problems of national defence. As soon as the foreign danger was over, numerous rajput chiefs jumped into the field to measure their swords in the traditional feudal style. Some of them were ambitious and successful warriors but devoid of statesmanship or diplomatic skill to earn recognition as the national rulers of the country while majority of them were the typical feudal lords of average capabilities who exhibited parochial or clanish mentality. They were usually at daggers drawn with each other; and they wasted their valuable resources in men and material in internecine wars. They often failed, even within their own dominions, to provide adequate relief to the uprooted and badly mauled subjects needing rehabilitation. They did not lack the resources perhaps *albeit* they proved themselves to be void of creative thinking and moral courage to guide the people. As a result, India presented an equally dismal picture in 1175 when the turks struck the country for the second time, now under the leadership of Muhammad Ghori and his brilliant 'slave' officers who swept across the whole of northern India. Torn by mutual jealousies, dissensions, and other self-destructive habits, the rajputs failed to take concerted action against the invaders and, in the consequence, were crumbled to dust, one by one, in quick succession, under the heels of the turks.

Collapse of the Hindu Socio-Political Set-up

The causes of defeat of the feudal rajput chieftains and collapse of the hindu socio-political set-up of early medieval India are not far to seek. The decadent political structure, the defunct military organisation, the stagnant Indian society with its inherent socio-religious and economic imbalance which created a gulf between the masses and the socio-political leadership, have already been discussed in the foregoing pages of this study. These carried the seeds of decay of the pre-muslim Indian society and its rajput leadership. It was plagued, particularly, by the self-destructive characteristics—the neglect of a sound political-cum-military machinery for collective self-defence, the lack of a feeling of overall national consciousness, and mutual warfare. No wonder, it stood a very poor chance of survival in the struggle against the turkish invaders.

On the other hand, the turkish invaders displayed superiority over their Indian adversaries in many respects. They possessed better military organisation, discipline and coherence. They invariably followed one leader and fully realised the value of unity of command. Their leaders were well-acquainted with the latest techniques of warfare, and they took keen interest in updating their knowledge in this respect. The turkish invaders were fine archers who depended primarily on the use of efficient and well-disciplined cavalry against the rajput infantry. They made intelligent use of

the war strategies ; they resorted to sham fights, laid ambuscades, made sudden attacks, kept armies in reserve, and employed all means, fair or foul, to win the war. They fought as desperadoes. They were conscious of the fact that they had to fight in a foreign land; therefore, if defeated, they might not be able to return alive to their country.

The turkish invaders were full of religious zeal; they stood up to spread Islam by force of arms. They believed that if they were successful in the 'holy war' against the 'kafirs', this world would lie at their feet, otherwise they would attain martyrdom in their death and go straight to the *jannat*. Thus the invaders fought for a cause while the rajputs had nothing better than clan or class interests to defend.

The love for loot and plunder was, of course, a great material incentive to the turkish invaders to fight stubbornly. They justly distributed the spoils among themselves and their leaders on set principles. They received promotions and rewards from their leaders for excellent performance in the war. Naturally, every muslim soldier, who took part in the expedition, had his personal career and fortune at stake. No high office, not even that of the sultan or supreme commander of the forces, was beyond the reach of a really capable soldier. They produced, even from the ranks of their slaves, highly capable men like Qutubuddin Aibek and Bakhtiyar Khalji, but for whose contributions, Muhammad Ghori might not have been able to conquer the whole of northern India during his life-time. Attracted by the fabulous wealth of India and the love of adventure, thousands of muslim youths from central Asia swelled the ranks of the turkish armies as *ghazis* who usually brought with them their own horses and weapons of war; on the other hand, the military resources of the rajput chiefs were confined to their own principalities, whose dimensions were sometimes not greater than those of a modern Indian district. The turkish commanders could afford to exercise qualitative control over the selection of their soldiers whereas the rajput princes had to be content with the addition to their numbers alone.

The Indians had to pay heavily not only for their faults but also for their virtues of character. The rajputs did not practise treachery in warfare; they were merciful and generous to their enemies to a fault. A rajput would seldom attack his foe when the latter was without adequate armament, or injured or fallen on the ground; he would rather give him a fair chance to settle the scores between the parties. A rajput knew how to fight and die chivalrous death whereas the sole objective of a turkish soldier was to win by hook or by crook. The doctrine of *ahimsa* or non-violence had made the Indians, in general, and the buddhists among them, in particular, humane and peace-loving. They displayed non-aggressive, rather non-defensive, attitude even in the face of the unscrupulous invaders and thus fell an easy prey to their aggression. The eleventh

and twelfth centuries presented the last phase of the declining ancient Indian civilisation and culture, during which Toynbee's formula of *Beat-Rally-Rout*[12] played its full circle. Throughout this period, the uncreative political leadership of the rajputs was faced by a recurring challenge which it repeatedly failed to meet. At the first holocaust, wrought by Mahmud of Ghazni, the rajput polity of northern India suffered a serious setback from which it never fully recovered; and at the next crisis, viz; Muhammad Ghori's invasions, it 'went to pieces irretrievably'. The breakdown of their political and military structure was followed quickly by the disintegration and decay of ancient Indian civilisation. Toynbee describes this outcome as due to the 'nemesis of creativity'. To use his phraseology, the rajput 'leadership had lost its claim to the mimesis of the society at large'; 'nevertheless, it insisted on imposing its will on the society'. It marked 'the most fateful occurrence' in the life-history of the Indian civilisation because the rajputs represented merely 'the dominant minority' who had ceased to be creative in their outlook, and were 'hardened into some self-stiltifying idolatory—'the worship of the ghost of the defunct polity'. And they crumbled down to the dust before the turkish invaders owing to their 'sin of pride'.[13]

Social changes under the Mamluk Sultans

The Erstwhile Slaves as Masters: Muhammad Ghori had no male issue to inherit his empire; *albeit* he had a passion for acquiring turkish slaves whom he treated with affection and care. He provided opportunities to them to develop their personalities and build their careers. It shows his natural love and sympathies for the persons of his own race who had suffered immensely at the hands of the muslim invaders of the arabic and persian stocks as well as 'the infidel' mongols. By purchasing turkish youth, Muhammad Ghori, in fact, liberated them from the clutches of others and afforded them royal patronage; in turn, he received immense affection and unqualified service from them. Many of these slaves rose to prominence as military generals who earned reputation for courage, fighting skills and organisational abilities. They served their master with loyalty and helped him in expanding the boundaries of his empire; they were devoted to the tasks entrusted to them. Muhammad Ghori is said to have once remarked that these slaves were his sons who would inherit his name, fame the fortunes of his empire. That is exactly what happened; on his death, his brilliant slave officers 'adorned their heads with the crown of royalty which had belonged to that king, and the influence of the light of Islam was preserved through their power over different parts and provinces of Hindustan.'[14]

The Indian possessions of Muhammad Ghori were inherited by his turkish 'slave' officer Qutubuddin Aibek who set himself up as an independent ruler at Lahore and untagged his dominions

from the apron-strings of the Ghurid empire. His son and successor Aram Shah was overthrown by Altumish, in turn, a 'slave' officer of Aibek, who transferred his capital to Delhi in 1211 A.D.; thus bringing into existence what is called the 'sultanate of Delhi'. The period of rule of the *mamluk* or *slave* sultans (1206-90) was marked by tension and serious conflict between the foreign muslim settlers and the indigenous hindu population of the Indo-Gangetic valley.

The Influx of Foreign Immigrants : The mamluk sultans were foreign victors with no roots in the Indian soil. They had established their rule by force, led by 'the armies of Islam', and, therefore, depended heavily upon the foreign ruling elite as well as the soldiery for the protection of their newly-founded state in the teeth of opposition from the rajputs. They declared the sultanate to be 'an Islamic state' which stood for the protection and welfare of muslims alone, while the hindus, who constituted the bulk of the population, were treated as second-class citizens. They were dubbed as *zimmis* and allowed to live under the protection of 'the Islamic state' on payment of *jaziya*. That is why, it were the muslims, whether foreign immigrants or the local converts, who constituted the backbone of the sultanate for a long time. They formed the ruling elite, supplied the soldiery, and were treated as the most favoured children of the state. It was, therefore, but natural for the sultans to multiply their number and strive for the expansion of their influence throughout their dominions. They extended an open invitation to all the muslim immigrants from central Asia who poured into India in never-ending streams in search of fortunes. The nobility of the mamluk sultans was primarily of the turkish race though the men-of-arms and scholars of other races also formed a formidable part of it. Soon after the birth of the sultanate, the turks were cut off from their ancestral land of central Asia which were overrun by the mongols. Altumish and Balban, the founders of the second and the third mamluk dynasties respectively, made a signal contribution towards the consolidation of the turkish rule in northern India and its protection from the mongol menace. The spread of mongol sway in central Asia proved indirectly very helpful to the sultanate of Delhi. It led to the migration of muslim refugees to India on a very large scale; they were received with open arms and accorded protection and the means of livelihood by the sultans. Balban rendered a great service in extending liberal patronage to the muslim immigrants from central Asia; by granting asylum and huge privy purses to the central Asian fugitive princes, he won their goodwill and made himself famous in the far-off lands. As a consequence, brilliant scholars, military generals and administrators from the muslim countries flocked to his court for service and settlement in India.

Process of Urbanisation

Mohammad Habib describes the set-up of the sultanate of Delhi to be as 'the urban revolution in northern India'. The Ghurid conquest of northern India, from the banks of the Ravi to those of the Brahmaputra, within a period of a quarter century. is, of course, 'a paradox of Indian history'. In the words of Habib, 'seldom in human history has, a country so large, so populous and, according to the academic standards of the age, so cultured and civilised as far as the upper classes were concerned, been conquered so easily, and by such commonplace men (as the turks). Both in the rapidity of its establishment and longevity of the system it established, the Ghurian achievement stands in sharp contrast with the British rule. The explanation lies not in the military but in the social factors. He writes that the establishment of the sultanate had two special aspects : (a) the substitution of the foreign turkish nobility for the *thakurs* as the governing class, and (b) the removal of all discriminations from the city-workers, regardless of their creed. 'These two movements', according to Habib, 'were integrally connected. All other aspects of this revolution were contingent and ancillary'. In his opinion, 'the Indian city-labour, both hindu and muslim, helped to establish the new regime, and it also maintained it through all revolutions and revolts, for over five hundred years'. By the term 'hindu city-labour' he implies the hindu masses, including the artisans, city workers and menials who had suffered indignities at the hands of their high caste aristocracy since ages ; most of them were dubbed 'untouchables' and compelled to dwell outside the walled-cities, which were reserved for 'the *seths*, *banyas*, *brokers*, *clerks*, *jotshis*, teachers of all kinds, *vaids*, temple-priests, and all other non-productive sections of the hindu society, who depended exclusively on the former for the supply or production of grain, cloth, arms and the sundry consumer goods. The 'city-labour' and peasants constituted the productive wing of the hindu society, 'who might have fought had they been so inclined, but were left outside the city walls': most of them acknowledged the muslim sway without a demur.

The above-mentioned argument of Mohammad Habib in support of his contention does contain a grain of truth but is not enough to explain the wonderful contributions made consciously or unconsciously by the sultans of Delhi and their ruling elite in accelerating the process of urbanisation in medieval India. The turkish conquerors made their settlements in India as urban people; this factor, however, had nothing to do with their living habits or cultural heritage. In a newly conquered country, usually surrounded by hostile population of an entirely different social order, the sultans as well as their provincial and local nobles and bureaucracy, for reasons of safety and congenial company, preferred to stay amidst their military regiments or armed personnel, accompanied by their entire families and house-hold establishments, including

slaves, the number of which was constantly on the increase. Because of their different living style, food habits, social customs, and attitudes, they did not like to stay in the midst of the hindu urban classes in the old towns, nor were they welcomed by the highly caste-ridden and closed hindu society. Thus it was that the sultans and their ruling elite had to build new townships at their military cantonments or in the vicinity of the old hindu towns and cities. It led to a sort of revolution in the process of urbanisation of the country, unknown or unheard of in the past. Qutubuddin Aibek laid the foundation of the first of the so-called 'seven cities' of Delhi built by the sultans in the early medieval period. Apart from the construction of public-utility buildings, mosques and palaces, he showed some taste for architecture by ordering the erection of the Qutub Minar in the heart of the first muslim township of Delhi. His example was followed with enthusiasm and zeal by the successive sultans and their nobility, and, as a result, the whole of the sultanate was studded with beautiful towns and cities which formed the central, provincial or local headquarters of the turkish bureaucracy. There was hardly any old town of pre-muslim India which did not receive the face-lift by the addition of some new building complexes, mosques or other architectural structures. Before long, the hindu businessmen, bankers as well as the working classes, including the erstwhile low-castes, also began to make their appearance as dwellers of these towns, and the centuries-old social seclusion and caste barriers between the various sections of the hindus were obliterated to some extent through the medium of these composite urban habitats. The muslims did not practise discrimination against the untouchables, artisans and other low-castes among the hindus ; rather, the treatment meted out to them by the muslims, high and low, was more dignified than the one they received at the hands of their own high-caste co-religionists. It is in this sense, and not on the basis of the arguments advanced forward by Mohammad Habib that we accept the following observations, with certain reservations, of that learned scholar regarding the process of urbanisation during the sultanate period :

> "The invasion of the ghurian turks brought about this great social and economic revolution because the industrial and social forces in the country had been prepared for it for centuries, but their path had been barred by the ideology of the caste system and the *thakur*-military regime. External pressure broke this regime, and then with remarkable rapidity, in the course of half a generation, the country settled on new lines. Everyone, except the topmost *rais* and their immediate followers, accepted the new social order. The forces of resistance vanished as if by magic. Viewed in a proper scientific and non-communal perspective in the context of world-history and of future Indian history, the so-called ghurian conquest of India was really a revolution of Indian city-labour led by the

ghurian turks. We need not be surprised that those who led the revolution reaped the rewards of success. But only by the substitution of the ghurian turks for the *thakur*-regime could the city-workers obtain their rights. The one was impossible without the other. Centuries of bitter experience had proved that the old hindu aristocracy was too tradition-bound to lead a social revolution''.[15]

Iqta System : The Spread of Muslim Influence and Population in the Countryside

The *iqtadari* was a unique type of land distribution system introduced by the mamluk sultans the parallel of which is hard to find elsewhere in the Indian history; the feudal estates of the rajput era and the *jagirdari* system of the mughals were quite distinct from it. It was a system of the allotment of vast tracts of land, called *iqtas*, among the military nobles. As we know, handful of the turkish nobles, assisted by thousands (but not *lakhs*) of adventurers, apparently strangers to the land and its people, scored a military victory and set up as rulers. The number of the victors was very small, rather insignificant, as compared with the teeming millions who had been subjugated by them. The conquerors established their military hold over important towns and fortifications *albeit* the vast land mass of the countryside with the bulk of the Indian population was yet to be explored and conquered. In order to facilitate this task, the sultans parcelled out their vague and undefined dominions into *iqtas* and distributed these among their ambitious and enterprising nobles. The latter, called the *iqtadars* or *muqtas*, were instructed to carry on aggressive campaigns against the powerful and refractory hindu chiefs in their region and bring them under effective subjugation. Literally, the word 'iqta' means 'a portion' ; 'technically, it was the land or revenue assigned by the ruler to an individual'[16] in lieu of service to the state. The *iqta* was a half-conquered and poorly administered territory over which the *assignee* was expected to establish a firm hold, and introduce civil administration there as he thought fit or feasible. The *iqtadar* recruited his own army which was made self-supporting by utilising the resources of his possessions. He held the *iqta* almost as rent-free grant in lieu of the state service. He paid to the sovereign a specified amount of *kharaj* or offered presents in cash or kind, including gold, silver, horses, elephants or other precious articles every year and rendered military service to the state when needed. Qutubuddin Aibek and Altumish 'derived full advantage' from the *iqta* system; 'they used it as an instrument for liquidating the feudal order of Indian (hindu) society and linking up the far-flung parts of the empire to one centre. Through it they satisfied also the cupidity of the turkish governing class, and solved the urgent problem of maintenance of law and order and the collection of revenues in the newly conquered territories'.[17]

The *iqtadars* were not ordinary *jagirdars* or holders of rent-free assignments; they made personal contribution towards the expansion and consolidation of the turkish rule in India in the thirteenth century. Most of them were self-made men who held the *iqtas* as their personal estates which were passed on to their descendants in heritage. Ordinarily, the foreign immigrants among the muslims shunned cultivation because their services were in great demand in civil and military affairs. Soldiery was a very respectable and paying profession for the commoners among the immigrants who could secure service under any noble in any part of the sultanate they pleased. It needs no argument that before the advent of the muslims, the entire countryside was inhabited by the hindus, the sons of the soil. The *iqtadars* were always eager to increase the number of their co-religionists within the territories under their control. Therefore, they encouraged the settlement of muslim families in the countryside and distributed lands among them for cultivation. They attempted to create a nucleus of the muslim agriculturist class in each village in the midst of the hindu peasantry. The lands of the refractory hindu peasants were confiscated and distributed among the muslim soldiery and other immigrants from central Asia. Very often the hindu peasantry resisted the usurpation of their ancestral fields by the *iqtadars* and their muslim followers, and, at places, took up arms against them. It led to revolts of the hindu peasantry, followed by armed conflicts and social tension in the countryside. It is in this sense that the socio-cultural background of the military expeditions of Altumish and Balban against the hindu peasantry of the Indo-Gangetic valley can be properly understood. In an attempt to solve the law and order problem through the *policy of blood and iron*, Balban strove his best to bring the hindu populace of the countryside under his firm control by the transfer of cultivable lands to the muslims and establishment of their social groups in the midst of the hindu peasantry. Balban's campaign against the rebellious meos or mewatis (in modern Haryana) can be cited as a typical example in support of our contention. Balban moved out of Delhi at the head of a large army and set up his military camp in the heart of the meo-infested areas. The jungle around Delhi was cleared and roads constructed to facilitate the movement of armies; a fort was built at Gopalgir and many police posts established in the whole *iqta* of Delhi. The sultan meted out a very cruel treatment to the mewatis and their families; about 'a hundred thousand males above twelve' were massacred in cold blood; their women were enslaved, property pillaged and houses put on fire. Their lands were confiscated and distributed among his enterprising turko-afghan officers.[18] Similar policy was adopted by Balban towards the hindu peasantry of the Doab and Oudh (modern Uttar Pradesh). The people of these regions were rich and prosperous owing to the fertility of the soil; they did not pay taxes to the state regularly nor permitted the muslim officers to establish their foothold in their habitats. They resented and offered tough

opposition to the muslim settlers in their midst. The people as a whole felt indignation over the loss of their national independence, though to their misfortune, they failed to produce any leader of standing who could unite them to wage a struggle for freedom against the turkish rule. Balban made up his mind to crush the hindu resistance in these for all times to come. He parcelled out the entire Gangetic valley into small *iqtas* or fiefs which were assigned to ambitious turko-afghan officers, called *iqtadars*, with the instructions to crush the insubordinate *kafirs* with an iron hand. He built strong forts at Kampil, Patiali and Bhojpur which were heavily garrisoned by the state troops, ready to help the *iqtadars* in their punitive expeditions against the hindu peasantry. The muslim settlers were granted tax-free land with powers to defend themselves by force of arms. Barani writes that the sultan himslef 'went to Kampil and Patiali and stayed in these territories for five or six months. The whole villages of the rebels were wiped out of existance, and their women enslaved. A lot of plunder of that region came to Delhi where 'slaves and cattle became cheap.'[19] The state policy of the mamluk sultans, particularly the institution of *iqtadari* went a long way in establishing Islam as a social force in the Indo-Gangetic valley.

The *iqtadari* system became a hereditary institution with the passage of time; the emergence of the hereditary *iqtadars* or feudal lords among the turkish nobility laid the foundations of their rule very deep in the Indian soil. The population of the msulims rose by leaps and bounds. The hereditary *iqtadars* backed by a solid mass of muslim peasantry, became so well-established and assertive that they, in turn, began to defy the central authority of the sultanate whenever they could afford to do so. That is why Alauddin Khalji and Muhammad bin Tughluq had to adopt stringent measures against them. They retained the *iqtas* as administrative units but changed the method of recruitment of their holders. They resumed the hereditary *iqtas* which were entrusted to civil-cum-military servants who acted somewhat like district afficers under the overall supervision of the regional or provincial governors. As the provincial government of the sultanate was not well-developed, some of the *iqtadars* were under the direct control of the central government and were treated as provincial governors for all intents and purposes. Politically important or prosperous *iqtas* were given to the princes of the royal blood as their personal estates. The evil of hereditary *iqtadars* was revived by the successors of Alauddin Khalj and subsequently made universal by Firoze Tughluq who parcelled out the whole of his kingdom into *iqtas* or fiefs which were distributed among the nobles as rent-free assignments. Theoretically, the *iqtadars* were under obligation to remit their surplus revenues to the state treasury and get their accounts checked by the royal auditors of the *diwan i wazarat*. Of course, the sultan granted villages, agricultural lands or residential places as rent-free grants to scholars, saints and others within an

iqta which were excluded from the jurisdiction of the *iqtadars*. The latter, in turn, granted free assignment to their relations, subordinates and brilliant lieutenants, thus strengthening and perpetuating the feudal element in the muslim socio-political order. Before the turn of the century, the muslim immigrants, under the leadership of the turkish aristocracy, were well-established in Hindustan which they adopted as the country of their domicile, and the population of muslims had grown enough to assume the form of a well-regulated society, distinct from the hindus. Thus the dawn of the fourteenth century saw the populace of India divided horizontally into two well-defined social orders, based on religious denominations—Hinduism and Islam.

3. Muslim Social Structure

Two Parallel Social Orders—Hinduism and Islam

The thirteenth century, as reviewed in historical perspective in the previous chapter, constitutes the most crucial period in the history of Indian civilisation and culture. It witnessed a serious conflict, rather a direct clash or head-on collision between two social systems, Hinduism and Islam—the one indigenous and the other with an extraneous background. With the collapse of the rajput feudal polity in its struggle against the turkish arms, the Indian society, in the north, was placed at the mercy of the new masters and their wholly foreign ruling elite. The foreign victors laid the foundations, in Delhi, of a new political structure, based on exotic religious denomination, and championed the cause of Islam not only as a missionary faith but also as a new social system. Having lost their national indpendence, the socio-economic as well as religious leadership of the hindus were put on the defensive. They failed to stem the rising tide of Islam, backed by the victorious soldiers in shining armour. Rendered defenceless and thoroughly demoralised, they retreated from their positions of socio-cultural predominance, and sought shelter in the conch-shell of their rigid caste structure, leaving the hindu masses to strive for bare existence and manage their affairs as they could afford. With the strengthening of its military hold and stabilisation of the Islamic state in Delhi, the hindus of all classes, high and low, had to bear with it. Having failed to turn the muslims out of the country by force, they had no other alternative but to submit to their new masters and accept the *fait accompli*. On the other hand, the turkish victors also failed in their ultimate goal to compel or persuade the entire hindu populace to embrace Islam with a view to transforming the *Dar ul Harab* of India into *Dar ul Islam* as they had done in Persia and other countries of central Asia. Therefore, after strenuous struggle, they came to terms with their hindu subjects. The forces of social stress and strain continued to rage with varying degrees of intensity in various parts of the country throughout the thirteenth century. The net outcome of

this struggle was that, by the beginning of the fourteenth century, Islam was firmly rooted in the Indian soil as a powerful social force. The Indian society thus came to be divided horizontally into two well-defined social orders, based on religious denominations; for the sake of convenience, we may term them as the Hindu Society and the Muslim Society respectively.

Composition of the Muslim Society

Muslim Aristocracy : Shihabuddin *alias* Muizuddin, better known as Muhammad Ghori, the conqueror of northern India, belonged to the turkish race; therefore, the military and political power of the muslims in India was concentrated in the hands of his turkish slave officers, generally called the *muizze* or *ghurid* or *ghori* nobles. They supplied as many as three ruling dynasties, in succession, to the sultanate of Delhi in the thirteenth century. The ruling elite of the sultanate during the reign of the mamluk sultans (1206-90) were composed exclusively of the foreign immigrants, including the turks, persians. afghans, and 'a sprinkling of the arabs'; they comprised the aristocracy or 'upper class' of the muslim society. Of course, the *turk* acted as 'the most jealous guardian of this aristocracy'; his 'military power enabled him to reserve the socio-cultural leadership of the muslims for the men of his own race'. The turkish aristocracy suffered from some of superiority complex which was based on their phenomenal success in the struggle for existence. They had not only carved out a mighty kingdom in India, far away from their homeland, but also successfully withstood 'the mongol storm when all others went down elsewhere in Asia'. There was 'substance in Balban's claim that not less than fifteen sovereign princes from muslim Asia had found asylum in his kingdom. Unquestionably, the Indian turk had proved himself the leader of the eastern world.'[20]

Within themselves, the turkish ruling elite could roughly be classified into three categories. The *ghurids* proper were the kinsmen of Muhammad Ghori and members and relations of his ancestral clan. The *tazik turks* were the freemen, the turkish immigrants who had come to India of their choice and sought patronage of Muhammad Ghori and his lieutenants; they constituted a microscopic section of the turkish nobility. The third category comprised the turkish slave officers of Muhammad Ghori; they were most numerous and influential among the nobility. Muhammad Ghori himself had put greater faith in his *slave* officers and shown preference to them over the others; Qutubuddin Aibek, who inherited his Indian possessions, belonged to this category. In the struggle for socio-political dominance, the turkish slave officers of Qutubuddin Aibek, called the *qutbi* nobles, came to acquire a premier position among the nobility during the reign of their master; Shamsuddin Altumish was their chief representative. Altumish, in turn, created a new class of the turkish nobility which comprised his own slaves, promoted as officers. They were

referred to as the *shamsi* nobles, after the name of their master. After some time, during the heydays of Altumish's reign, forty of these slave officers constituted the top leadership among the *shamsi* nobles who held all the important portfolios as state ministers and regional military governors; they earned the nick-name of *chahalgani* or the *chalisa*—'the forty'. They helped Altumish in the consolidation of the sultanate. Balban, who established the third mamluk dynasty on the throne of Delhi, in 1266 A.D.; was one of 'the forty' slaves of Altumish.

Classification of the Aristocracy

The ruling elite of the sultanate, who comprised the newly emerged aristocracy of their times in the thirteenth century, could be vaguely classified into two categorise, the *ahl e saif* or the *umara* (pl. of *amir*), and the *ahl e qalam* or the *ulama*.

The *ahl e saif* or *ahl e shamshir* - 'men of the sword' belonged to the warrior class among the immigrants who had settled their scores with the rajput adversaries on the battle-field. It was not surprising, therefore, that their military rank also determined their social status in the aristocracy; they bore titles such as *khan*, *malik amir*, *sipahsalar* and *sar i khail* in the descending order of socio-political hierarchy. The members of the royal household comprised but a part of the *ahl e saif;* at the best, they could be called *primus inter pares*. The sultanate was based on the active support and cooperation of the *umara* or the nobility. They constituted the back-bone of the sultanate and formed a part and parcel of the sovereign power. The nobles commanded the armies and contributed towards the establishment and expansion of the sultanate. They supplied ministers, provincial governors, *iqtadars* and other high executive officers from among them and exercised great influence on the state policies. The crown was not beyond the reach of a capable and ambitious noble. A warrior of higher rank was generally styled as *amir* (plural *umara*), the title once borne by the sovereign muslim rulers of central Asia.[21] They were all foreign immigrants, with the predominance of the turks, during the period of rule of the mamluk sultans (1206-90).

The *ahl e qalam* - 'men of the pen' were the muslim theologians, scholars and administrators who were collectively known as the *ulama* (pl. of *alim*); they constituted the brain of the sultanate while the *umara* can be referred to as the *sword-arm* of the turkish rule in India. The *ulama* were mostly of non-turkish origin; the arabic and persian theologians and intellectuals occupied a predominant position among them. They held a firm hold over the missionary organs of Islam, and controlled the mosques, *khanqahs*, educational institutions and holy shrines. Most of them belonged to the orthodox *sunni* school of thought. The *sadr us sadur* —'the minister incharge of the ecclesiastical department and religious endowments ', and *qazi ul quzat*-'the chief justice', usually acted as

spokesmen of the *ulama* and were treated as their representatives by the latter. The *ulama* exercised a great influence on the policies and functions of the state. They interpreted the Islamic law and regarded themselves as the spiritual guardians of the Islamic state. They enjoyed respect and prestige among the muslim masses and, because of their popular appeal, demanded attention of the sultan and the nobility alike. The sultan always felt obliged to treat them with deference. Even the most powerful of the mamluk sultans, Ghiasuddin Balban, had to obey them in the pursuit of his state policy, and keep them in good humour by extending liberal state patronage. The *ulama* tended to dominate the state politics, sometimes over the head of the nobility, under the weak or orthodox sultans.

The ruling elite of the sultanate, including the *umara* and the *ulama*, were extremely conscious of their socio-political importance, and they jealously safeguarded their high privileges; so also did the mamluk sultans. They did not tolerate that the Indian converts to Islam and other muslims of non-privileged classes should claim a status of social or political equality with them. We have it on the testimony of Barani that the earlier sultans of Delhi contemptuously treated the low-born people. Altumish had dismissed thirty-three officers from government service on account of their low-birth. It has already been explained in the first chapter of this study, entitled 'The State and Society', how Balban freely resorted to discrimination between the high born and the low-born muslims in the matter of recruitment to the higher state services. The sovereign was expected to set the trends in the socio-cultural leadership; therefore, following in his footprints, the muslim aristocracy observed class, racial and tribal distinctions in on way better than the caste divisions of the hindus. They exercised discriminations between themselves on the bases of racial and lineal considerations. There existed a sharp cleavage between the arabs and non-arabs who did not belong to 'the holy land' of the Prophet. Among the arabs, higher social status was enjoyed by *sheikhs* and *sayyads*. A *sheikh* - 'venerable leader' cliamed descent from the Qureshi tribe of the Prophet which was, in turn, split up into three branches - the Siddiqi, Faruqi and Abbasi. [22] A *sayyad* which implied 'a lord', sometimes styled as *pirzada* or 'the descendant of a saint or a *mushaikh*', claimed descent from Fatima, daughter of the Prophet. Next place of pride in the social hierarchy of the muslim aristocracy was occupied by the high-born among the turkish slave officers and others in the descending order. The prejudicial conduct of the mamluk sultans, and the racial and lineal divisions among the aristocracy were in no way conducive to the well-being of the sultanate of Delhi and its grandees.

Awam o Khalq or the Non-Privileged Classes

The non-privileged classes of the muslims or the masses in the thirteenth century India included in their fold, among others,

well-marked social segments of Indian converts to Islam, the slaves and their offsprings. The muslim society of India, in the thirteenth century, did not have a middle class though some rudiments of this class can be discerned among the *awam o khalq*. For this purpose, reference may be made to the soldiery, particularly those who received land grants in lieu of service either from the sultans or their nobles, including the *iqtadars*. The muslim commoners who occupied subordinate ranks and positions in the army and civil services, particularly the judiciary and education, also belonged to this category. The muslim *caravan* leaders and those who plied trade and commerce, of course, formed but a microscopic minority in the vast body of the hindu bankers and businessmen, whose standing and status as middle class had received recognition at the hands of the mamluk sultans in spite of their categorisation as the *zimmis*. A select few among the muslim merchants, styled *saudagars*, *tajirs* and *malik ut tujjar*, were admitted to the muslim aristocracy by the sultans.

The Indian Muslims : The hindu converts to Islam and their offsprings were called the Indian muslims. To begin with, their number was small but by the close of the thirteenth century they had come to form the bulk of the muslim population. Most of them belonged to the erstwhile low-castes among the hindus, including the artisans, urban working classes and the 'untouchables'. On embracing Islam, they at once received liberation from religious, social and economic disabilities from which they had suffered at the hands of their high-born hindu community. They were exepmted from the payment of *jaziya* and were recognised as the full-fledged citizens of the Islamic state. They received perks from the state and were given preference over the hindus in the matter of recruitment to the civil and military services. Nevertheless, the Indian muslims could not claim social equality with the muslim aristocracy of the foreign pedigree. Most of the Indian muslims, because of their poor educational, socio-cultural and economic backgrounds, were incapable of competing with the foreign immigrants for the higher social status. Some of them who acquired fortunes or claimed academic attainments in the Persian and Arabic languages and literature or won laurels in the military service, without receiving corresponding recognition or promotions, felt discouraged and demoralised. Deprived of higher socio-cultural status and recognition by the prejudicial attitude of the foreign immigrants, they smarted under discontent and, in 1290 A.D., actively participated in the overthrow of the ruling oligrachy, under the leadership of the young khalji nobles who belonged to the non-privileged class of the turkish immigrants.

The Slaves : The system of slavery was prevalent in India before the advent of Islam *albeit* the mamluk sultans and their turkish nobility, who themselves happened to be the products of a highly commercialised institution of slavery, gave a new dimension to this social evil. The practice of recruiting domestics and hired

labour for menial services and manual work was conspicuous by its absence among them. Almost all the manual and menial services were rendered by the slaves. It were not the hired labour or paid workers but slaves who supplied their services to the court and the royal *harem ;* huge armies of slaves were put to work for the construction of roads and public buildings in state-owned *karkhanas* and other public-utility services. They were employed by the aristocracy as retainers and domestics *;* they constituted 'a familiar feature of every respectable muslim home'.

K. M. Ashraf observes:

> "The life of a muslim nobleman was so much divided between war and pleasure (*razm* and *bazm*) that he hardly found any time to attend to his personal and domestic work. In course of time, the code of social behaviour began to view domestic work as unworthy of a gentleman's dignity and honour. The most important section of these domestics was comprised of male and female slaves".[23]

No wonder, the turkish sultans as well as their nobility strove hard to multiply their slaves by all means; they allowed their slaves to marry and bring up families because the offsprings of the slave couples also became automatically the property of their master, and this factor, incidentally added to the growing muslim population of Hindustan'.[24] The eunuchs constituted a special class of slaves who were procured for looking after the royal *harem* and the female apartments of the muslim aristocracy. Small children were either purchased or captured apparently as prisoners of war during the course of military confrontation and mercilessly castrated. We have it on the testimony of Yule and Barbosa that a flourishing trade in eunuchs was carried on in Bengal in the thirteenth century; stout and healthy eunuchs were sometimes imported from the Malay archipelago. K. M. Ashraf, on the basis of his intensive researches, throws interesting sidelights on the institution of slavery as popularised by muslim rulers in India; he writes:

> "Female slaves were of two kinds, those employed for domestic and menial work, and others who were bought for company and pleasure. The former, wanting in education and skill, and bought expressly for rough domestic work, were often subjected to all sorts of indignities; the latter had a more honourable and sometimes even a dominating position in the household. Apart from the slave girls of India, female slaves were also imported from China and Turkistan. On the whole the selection among the female slaves was made somewhat on the lines humourously suggested by a ..... noble: 'Buy a khurasani woman for her work, a hindu woman for her capacity for nursing children, a Persian woman for the pleasure of her company, and a Transoxianian for thrashing her as a warning for the other three'."[25]

In his deliberations on 'the status of slaves', K. M. Ashraf makes highly informative observations which the author of this study would like to reproduce extensively for the benefit of the readers; he observes:

> "It is usual to assume that slaves had no defined status or rights under Muslim rule in Hindustan. Such an opinion is not warranted by facts. Theoretically speaking, since a slave was usually a convert to Islam, he possessed the same rights as any other member of Muslim society which is still conspicuous for a certain amount of feeling of brotherhood and equality. Thus, his moral claims, though they might not receive due and full recognition, could never be denied. If he was originally a hindu, and probably of a lower caste, the social change was decidedly for the better. Even if he had belonged to a higher caste, he had lost his status in hindu society and could not go back to it except under very humiliating conditions.
>
> "In practice, the position of a slave was very different. He was usually a prisoner of war, and according to the military usage of the age, his life was at the mercy of his captor, who had full power of killing him or of otherwise disposing of him. This was clearly understood on both sides long before a military engagement commenced. So when a conqueror (now master of the slave) chose to spare the life of a slave and employ him for menial work, it was an act of favour and of special benevolence on the part of the former. Similarly, when the prisoner of war had been sold in the market and bought by a purchaser, he was as much the property of the buyer as any other commodity, and as such, could be given away as a gift or disposed of in any other way. No shrewd captor or buyer, however, neglected to take good care of his property which, given proper attention, could be converted into ready money, perhaps with a good deal of profit".[26]

That the Islamic social order, newly planted in India, which was, in theory, based on such high-sounding principles as 'social equality, brotherhood, dignity and self-respect of the individual' would be degraded to such limits, could never be envisaged by *Hazarat* Muhammad, the Prophet. Their lust for power had divided the muslim elite into racial groups and prompted them to exercise discrimination between the high-born and the low-born, while their greed for material benefits and exploitative spirit were responsible for reducing the human beings to the position of cattle, rather worse than that. No wonder, during the sultanate period, a horse of good breed was better looked after and more highly priced than a dozen men and women slaves. The hindus had practised untouchability and were guilty of having exploited their low-castes or the working classes; what the muslims did in this regard was equally disgraceful.

Notes :

1. A Spanish translation of the Arabic version of *Panchtantra* was brought out in c. 1215 A.D.: while its German translations were published in the fifteenth century.—Refer to R.C. Dutt, Later Hindu Civilisation, *loc. cit*: p. 153.
2. *BVB* IV, p. 640.
3. P C Hitti, *History of the Arabs;* London, 5th ed: 1953, p. 404.
4. From the Sanskrit word *chaturanaa*.
5. H.J.R. Murray quoted in *BVB* IV, p. 639.
6. Refer to K.A. Nizami, Religion and Politics: *op. cit*: pp. 76-78: & *Comp. HI*, V, pp. 137-42.
7. *E & D* II, p. 251.
8. *Tarikh i Firozeshahi*: p. 491.
9. *Comp. HI*, V. p. 138.
10. *Comp. HI*, V. p. 139.
11. "Mahmud was no missionary: conversion was not his object'...He took all that centuries of Indian industry had accumulated, and left the Indians to rebuild, as well as they could, the ruined fortifications of their cities and the fallen altars of their gods. He obtained the gold and the prestige he needed and he had aspired for nothing else,"—Mohammad Habib, *Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni* : S. Chand, 2nd ed.: 1951, p. 77.
12. Study of History, *op. cit*: VI, p. 285.
13. Toynbee, Study of History, *loc. cit*: IV, pp. 5, 129, 131-32, 245, 257-60.
14. Minhajus Siraj, *Tabaqat i Nasiri*: *E & D* II, Aligarh reprint, p. 295.
15. Collected Works, I, *loc. cit*: p. 73.
16. Nizami, Religion and Politics, *loc. cit*: pp. 128-29. For detail refer to the Encyclopaedia of Islam, pp, 461-63.
17. Nizami, Religion and Politics, p. 130.
18. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*: pp. 99-100.
19. *ibid* : p. 105.
20. A.B.M. Habibullah, *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India loc. cit : p. 295.*
21. viz: the Samanid *amirs* of Bukhara. Subuktagin was called the *amir* of Ghazni : the Indianised form of the title was *hamir*.
22. At a much later stage, a hindu convert, on the basis of his scholarship of the Islamic theology and intellectual attainments, could also add the epithet of *sheikh* to his name.
23. *Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan, op. cit*: p. 103.
24. *ibid*.
25. *ibid*; pp. 103-4.
26. *ibid*; pp. 104-5.

Chapter 4

Role of the Sultans in Socio-Economic Developments

1. Periodisation or Vertical Treatment in Socio-Cultural Development—Its Rationale

Socio-cultural development is a continuous phenomenon, a slow and steady process, for the study of which periodisation on the basis of political and military episodes or upheavals is not always feasible. No military action or political change, however sudden or violent, can mark either the abrupt ending of a cultural state or pinpoint the transplantation of new socio-cultural trends among the people affected by it. The dynastic or political divisions of medieval Indian history, or its vertical treatment by the author of this study, with reference to the socio-economic* development of India, may, therefore, seem to be apparently irrational or unscientific; such a treatment of the subject bristles with numerous difficulties too. The author is conscious of the fact that the arab conquest of Sind or invasions of Mahmud of Ghazni or Muhammad Ghori signal neither the beginning nor the ultimate outcome of the multifarious internal as well as external social forces at work in the life of the Indians *albeit*, in his humble opinion, these events or political developments can be earmarked as milestones in the long and chequered course of the Indian social stream like that of the Ganges from Kailash to the bosom of the Indian ocean. In his attempt to understand the socio-cultural development of medieval Indian society in its historical perspective, the author has actually been confronted with the intriguing problems of the forceful and continuous *temporal dynamics* of socio-religious and cultural change in India. Sometimes these political developments give birth to or accelerate the forces of social change while the others may themselves be the outcome of such forces at work in the preceding

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*Please note that it is socio-economic, not the cultural development, the author is fully conscious of the fact that cultural development cannot be confined into watertight-compartments in chronological order.

period. The state does play an important role in shaping the character and life of its people, and, the author had taken pains, in the first chapter of this study, to explain how the socio-cultural development of a people can be understood better within the framework of a political system to which they belong. It is in this context that he strives to point out the social content in the state policies, military campaigns, and administrative set-up of the mamluk sultans, the khaljis, the tughluqs, the rulers of Bahmani and Vijayanagar kingdoms, and the imperial mughals, respectively. An appreciation of this line of approach may enable the readers to find out the explicit and implicit elements of the medieval Indian society and culture as it finally assumed the shape during the period of rule of Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan (1556-1657).

Three-Fold Process of Social Change

It has rightly been said that the 'development of a social system consists of a process of structural adjustment under stresses generated by cultural innovations from internal or external sources. As interests of groups or associations, cultural complexes compete for institution within a social system till the tension is resolved either through integration by compatibility or outright rejection. This applies also to goals and values that normally serve as functional criteria of structural compatibility'.[1] Over a period of five hundred years, from the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries, medieval Indian social system was shaped in stages by the dynamics of forces which operated at three different levels—(a) within the hindu society; (b) on the newly emerging social set-up of the muslims; and, (c) between the two socio-cultural streams of Hinduism and Islam.

The study of political history of medieval India in the first two volumes brings home to us that the major part of the country remained free from muslim domination in the thirteenth century. Alauddin extended the boundaries of his empire to the south *albeit* his actual sovereignty stopped short at the Vindhyas 'save in the western part of the Deccan, during the last three years of his reign'. The imperial age of the sultanate lasted hardly three decades in the long span of three centuries (1206-1526) of its existence. Therefore, most of the provinces with their hindu multitudes remained outside the pale of the sultanate of Delhi. Thus the hindu social structure of the pre-muslim days, as discussed in the second chapter of this study, remained intact in many provinces, including southern India, for a long time. Whereas, the hindu subjects of the sultanate were under constant pressure to fight for the survival of their indigenous social order, the militant Islam had but 'little direct effect on the age-old social life' of the people elsewhere. Indirecty, however, 'the new menace to the existence of the indigenous culture' generated certain forces of social change as a protective measure. The saints of the *bhakti* movement showed their appearance in various parts of the country 'as rallying forces

for cultural survival *vis-a-vis* the external impact'.[2] The period witnessed 'the external impact of Islam, both politico-military and cultural, resulting in the decline of the superordinate socio-occupational position of the *kshatriya* and *brahaman* caste guilds. Cultural innovations in military, administration and revenue farming necessitated specialised training of large selected cadres with the consequence of open recruitment and promotion based on merit rather than birth ascription'.[3] Side by side, the instinct of self-preservation promoted the priestly class among the hindus to exhibit more orthodoxy and conservatism in their outlook than ever before; they made the caste structure still more rigid, and produced a number of *smriti* digests and commentaries 'tending towards the systematisation of the old social and religious law'.[4]

In the second instance, the muslim social order had assumed a definite form and shape by the beginning of the khalji rule; the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries constituted a formative period for its growth and development. The population of the muslims, during this period, increased rapidly, and so also did their social stratification. Alauddin Khalji took the banner of Islam as a political force to the south, to which the socio-cultural background was provided by Muhammad bin Tughluq a little later. These two sultans played a significant role in the spread of Islamic culture in the Indian peninsula.

In the third place, the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were marked by vigorous interaction between the socio-cultural streams of hinduism and Islam in every aspect of human life, giving birth to a stable and fairly progressive Indo-Muslim society. There was a healthy give-and-take between the hindus and muslims at all levels. The forces of synthesis between their respective systems of education and learning, art and architecture became fully operative, while the *bhakti* reformers and the *sufi* saints attempted to bridge the gulf between the two communities on religious, moral and spiritual planes. The social and cultural intercourse between the two communities had gone so far ahead that 'when Babar appeared on the scene, he had to fight to combined forces of the hindus and the muslims.'[5]

2: Socio-Economic Changes under the Khaljis

The Khalji Revolution

The establishment of the Khalji dynasty at Delhi in 1290 has been recognised by the modern historiographers of medieval Indian history a great revolution in the socio-political set-up of the sultanate and its ruling elite. The khaljis were one of the sixty-four clans of the turks *albeit* they did not belong to the ruling turkish elite of the mamluk sultans. They migrated to modern Afghanistan from their homeland in the fourth century of the Christian era, where they gradually adopted afghan socio-cultural traits and were

usually mistaken for them. Barani records that Jalaluddin, the founder of the Khalji dynasty, 'came of a race different from that of the turks, so that he had no confidence in them, nor would the turks own him as belonging to the number of friends'.[6] The khaljis joined the armies of Mahmud of Ghazni and Muhammad Ghori in large numbers and won applause from their masters for loyal and efficient service. When Muhammad Ghori was defeated and badly wounded in the first battle of Tarain (1190 A. D.) at the hands of Prithvi Raj (III) Chauhan, a khalji soldier saved his life and drove him to safety. Muhammad bin Bakhtiyar Khalji rose to be a military general of Muhammad Ghori, and he was given a free hand by the sultan in the conquest of Bihar and Bengal. He was rewarded with appointment as the governor of the conquered territories under the overall supervision of Qutubuddin Aibek, the then viceroy of Delhi. Under the independent rule of Aibek and the successive sultans of Delhi, the governorship of Bihar and Bengal was held by the khalji nobles almost as a matter of right. They afforded ample opportunities to the men of their clan to secure civil and military assignments. Incidentally, the mongols carried fire and sword into the valleys of Helmand and Kabul in the beginning of the thirteenth century, which compelled the khaljis to migrate *en masse* to India and swell the ranks of the muslim immigrants who made settlements in the Gangetic valley as soldiers and agriculturists. They constituted the masses among the muslim settlers; a few of their leaders occupied but subordinate administrative and military posts under the mamluk sultans. The khaljis had no claims to political power in Turkistan of Afghanistan nor were they recognised as a part of the ruling elite of Delhi. The mamluk sultans, on the other hand, had introduced racialism in muslim politics to serve their personal ends; they exercised racial discrimination at higher levels with a vengeance. Such a policy was not conducive to the welfare of the nascent Islamic state in India because it invariably led to a tug of war between the rival factions of the nobility. Accordingly, the capital was constantly plagued by court intrigues, disaffection and political murders, occasionally bursting forth into open revolts and bloodbaths which did not spare the sultans either. This game of power-politics, based on racial considerations, proved disastrous for the muslim nobility as a class which constituted the backbone of the sultanate; it wiped out many a capable military general, administrator and scholar, and deprived the state of their useful services. Balban made racialism and genealogy a fad in the matter of recruitment to higher services. It provoked widespread resentment among the muslim masses whoses number was ever on the increase by the addition of hindu converts and foreign immigrants among the rank and file. It gave a setback to the promising youth amongst them who aspired to secure gainful employment and build their careers on personal merit; they were alienated against the privileged aristocracy as it had come into existence during the rule of the mamluk sultans. Jalaluddin Khalji, the governor of Samana

under Kaiqubad, belonged to the unprivileged muslim masses who came to acquire a position of eminence at the royal court on merit as if by default. Therefore, when he carried out a military coup against the successors of Balban, he enjoyed, by and large, the cooperation, support and good wishes of the muslim masses although the aristocracy of Delhi took some time to shed their prejudice against the man, representing the wretched of the soil, who had dared to claim the throne. Barani writes that

> "In the course of the first year of his reign the citizens and soldiers and traders of all degrees went to Kilughari, where the sultan (Jalaluddin Khalji) held a public *darbar*. They were struck with admiration and amazement at seeing the khaljis occupying the throne of the turks, and wondered how the throne had passed from the one to the other."[7]

The accession to the throne of Jalaluddin Khalji was, therefore, not a mere change of dynasty; it signified a revolution in the muslim politics of India. It marked the end of an epoch of racial discrimination among the muslim aristocracy and sounded the death-knell of the privileged turkish nobility who had perpetuated their dominance in the muslim politics and social sphere for nearly a century.

Social Content in the Policies of Alauddin Khalji

Alauddin Khalji (1296-1316), a nephew and son-in-law of Jalaluddin Khalji who committed the murder of the reigning monarch and usurped the throne, was by far the greatest of all the sultans of Delhi; except Sher Shah Sur and Akbar, no muslim ruler of India stands comparison with him. As a man, he left much to be desired *albeit* he transformed the kingdom of Delhi into a mighty Indian empire by his sheer force of character and military skill; the credit for the penetration of muslim arms and plantation of Islamic faith and culture in the south goes exclusively to him. He protected the sultanate as well as the people of India, against the fury of the mongols; he struck terror in the hearts of the foreign invaders.

Separation of Religion from Politics: Alauddin Khalji was a despotic ruler; in an attempt to strengthen his autocratic rule, he crippled the power of the nobility and feudal aristocracy and did not give the *ulama* a free hand in determining the state policies. He was a highly self-willed man, with unscrupulous and aggressive temperament who never brooked interference into the state affairs by the nobility or the *ulama*. The nobles were kept firmly under his thumb by the sultan while the *ulama*, though kept in good humour, were seldom taken into confidence in the pursuit of his political or administrative measures. Of course, Alauddin took care not to antagonise the *mullas* and *sheikhs* through public criticism or ridicule. The muslim scholars, saints and divines received liberal

stipends (*madad i muash*) and honours from the state. All posts in the judicial and educational establishments were reserved for them: their chiefs were given a free hand in administering the educational institutions, courts, holy places, religious endowments and charitable funds. They also enjoyed sufficient freedom of action in tackling the socio-religious problems of the muslim community. At times, Alauddin suceessfully exploited muslim fanaticism in his wars against the hindu chieftains and treatment of the *zimmis*. Nevertheless, he was the first among the sultans of Delhi to separate religion from state politics; he initiated what may be called a secular state policy based on the principles of absolute despotism. Barani has to say that Alauddin Khalji,

> "came to the conclusion that polity and government are one thing, and the rules and decrees of (Islamic) Law are another. Royal commands belong to the king, legal decrees rest upon the judgment of *qazis* and *muftis*. In accordance with this opinion, whatever affair of state came before him, he only looked to the public good, without considering whether his mode of dealing with it was lawful or unlawful. He never asked for legal opinions about political matters, and very few learned men visited him."[8]

Administrative Reforms : Alauddin Khalji liberalised the state policy in the matter of recruitment of the public services. Ever since the inception of the sultanate, Persian had been introduced as the court language as well as the medium for the transaction of the state business. To begin with, it proved as a handicap to the Indians, including the hindu converts to Islam, in securing employment under the mamluk sultans. With the passage of time, however, the Indian converts took up the study of this language with enthusiasm ; they were followed in this though hesitatingly, by the hindus. By the turn of the century, the number of Persian educated Indians, including hindus and muslims, had grown fairly large ; it was, therefore, quite natural that they should aspire to seek employment for career under the government of the day. The mamluk sultans had reserved all the higher posts for the foreign immigrants; they exercised racial discrimination in the matter of recruitment to such services. This policy was discarded by Alauddin Khalji who threw open the public services to commoners, including the non-privileged muslim immigrants, Indian converts to Islam, and even the hindus. It made him very popular with his subjects. An excellent judge of human character, Alauddin had the knack of selecting the right men for the right job and knew how to get the maximum out of them. Though semi-literate, and possessed of a mere rule of thumb knowledge of things, he handled the administrative problems with an air of professional competence. He established peace and order in his dominions and provided much-needed security to his subjects. He tamed the services, suppressed the bureaucratic evils of indiscipline, corruption and

bribery ; none but the most honest and efficient officials had the chance of survival under the vigilent eyes of the imperial reporters and spies. His economic reforms, involving the fixation of prices, control of the markets and rationing of the consumers' goods, though not based on very scientific principles, were a unique contribution, envisaged by him far ahead of his times. In certain matters of land reforms, military organisation, and socio-economic policies, Alauddin Khalji anticipated Sher Shah Sur; his administrative set up carried the seeds of a progressive and secular state, which given the peace and stability for two or three generations more, could have ushered in an era of peace and prosperity, and advanced the progress of the country by at least two centuries. The fiscal policy of Alauddin Khalji, including the land reforms, price control and market regulations, overhauled the Indian economy, promoted trade and commerce, and exercised a deep impact on the socio-economic condition of his urban as well as rural subjects, hindus and muslims alike ; that is why its detailed treatment in this study merits consideration.

Fiscal Policy and Revenue Reforms of Alauddin Khalji

Strange though it may seem, the highly progressive fiscal reforms, as introduced by Alauddin Khalji, which have ensured a place of prominence for him in the annals of socio-economic history of the times, had a very humble beginning. During the early years of his reign, he had to face quite a few revolts at the hands of disaffected nobles and his ambitious kinsmen. There was no fixed law of succession among the sultans of Delhi, and Alauddin Khalji was especially a usurper who had no hereditary, legal or moral claim to the throne. That is why his ambitious nephew Akat Khan, in turn, conspired against him, struck him down, and taking him for dead, sat on the imperial throne, where he promtly received homage from the nobles; he had to pay with his life subsequently for the only fault that he had failed to chop off the head of Alauddin Khalji when the later lay unconscious on the ground in a pool of blood. It roused the sultan 'from his dreams of security and pride', and, in consultation with his confidential advisers, he came to the conclusion that there were 'four causes of such revolts'.[9] These were—the sultan's indifference towards the state affairs, particularly the espionage, social intercourse of nobles and intermarriages among their families, the use of wine, and the abundance of wealth. Alauddin took prompt steps to eliminate these causes.

The abundance of wealth which had been diagnosed by Alauddin's advisers to be the fourth cause of revolts, was tackled by the sultan in a very comprehensive way. He could understand better the role of money in determining the fate or fortunes of the kingdom; his confidential advisers had told him,

> "Money—engenders evil and strife, and brings forth pride and disloyalty. If men had no money, they would attend to their own business, and would never think of riots and revolts. And if rioters and rebels had no money, they could never count upon the assistance of low and turbulent people."[10]

Firishta, who belonged to the later medieval age, interprets the fourth cause of the revolts in a slightly different way; according to him,

> "The last and not the least cause, they (the wise men) thought, arose from the unequal division of property; they considered that the wealth of a rich empire, if confined to a few persons, only rendered them, as governors of provinces, more like independent princes than subjects of the state."[11]

In order to eliminate this 'source of trouble', Alauddin Khalji felt tempted and took vigorous steps to lay his hands on the property of the nobility and the well-to-do citizens. In a more sophisticated language, the sultan adopted a fiscal policy and introduced important changes in the revenue system of the state. He was, in fact, the first among the sultans of Delhi who took keen interest in regulating the financial affairs as a matter of state policy. By a stroke of the pen, Alauddin Khalji abolished the *iqta* or *zamindari* system in the crown lands and by a thrust of his sword, confiscated the *jagirs* and estates, stopped the practice of issuing grants of land in lieu of state service and abolished the pensions and endowments 'beyond a few thousand tankas'.[12] Of course, there are instances to prove that the system of granting lands in lieu of service or *in'am* could not be given up by Alauddin's government altogether. A probability has also been expressed that 'all assignments were not confiscated but their management was taken over by the government'.[13] There are, however, reasons to believe that Alauddin Khalji did apply the *Morton's fork* to extract surplus money from his subjects on one pretext or the other. Barani's observations on this issue,[14] though full of exaggeration, reveal the truth that Alauddin Khalji took drastic steps to crush the power of the nobility and strengthen the hands of the central government. But for the personal factor which lay behind his medieval outlook while talking of 'the state', the measures adopted by him seemed to be progressive, the success of which could have, ultimately, led to the evolution of a strong and stable central government. After having dealt with the nobility and other *grandees* of the state, Alauddin turned his attention towards the feudatory hindu chieftains, called *rais*, *rawats* or *thakurs* and hereditary hindu landlords, referred to by Barani as the *khuts*, *muqaddams* and *chaudharies*. The bulk of the cultivable land, under the sultans of Delhi, was held by the hindu peasant proprietors

(*balahars* of Barani) in their hereditary rights, according to the ancient traditions. So also was the case with their semi-official rural leaders and headmen of the villages—*khuts*, *muqaddams* and *chaudharies* who acted as landlords or intermediaries for the collection of land revenue and other state demands from the village folk.[15] It has correctly been said that 'Alauddin realised the limitations of his power. He was a muslim ruler of a non-muslim land and he knew that he could only govern on principles acceptable to the hindu masses.'[16] Therefore, the sultan 'had to leave the hereditary hindu dignitaries and their people to their traditional ways of life.'[17]

These *khuts*, *muqaddams* and *chaudharies* had, however, enriched themselves at the cost of the peasants as well as the state. They charged heavy dues in state demand and their collection fees (*khuti*) from the former, but paid very little to the exchequer. They embezzled the government money, fleeced the tillers of the soil and enjoyed luxurious lives; they 'paid no heed to the revenue officials'. Alauddin Khalji adopted a strong policy to remedy the situation. He issued two regulations to settle the state demand. The first regulation (*zabita*) adopted measurement of the cultivable land as the principle for determining the land revenue; *biswa* was declared to be the standared unit of measurement. The government demand was fixed at half of the produce which was to be realised 'without any diminution', and 'this rule was to apply to *khuts* (landlords) and *balahars* (cultivators) without the slightest distinction.'[18] The second regulation relates to a levy on the cattle. A tax for pasturage, at a fixed rate, was levied and demanded 'for every inhabited house, so that no animal, however wretched, could escape the tax'. It was made applicable to all the inhabitants, rich or poor, high or low.[19]

Alauddin Khalji was the first muslim ruler of Delhi who introduced measurement of land as the basis for the assessment of the state demand—one of the well-established ancient Indian customs. Of course, the demand for half of the produce as land revenue was excessive; nevertheless, it was in accordance with the general nature of Alauddin Khalji. The sultan deprived the *khuts* of their special privileges and abolished their *khuti*—'the collection charges'. They were also put under obligation to pay land revenue and other cesses at the same rate at which the other peasants were taxed. Barani's account on this point is not clear but it so appears that the *khuts* were expected to pay revenue on the land under their personal cultivation only, and not on behalf of or for the other peasants. If this is correct, then we conclude that Alauddin Khalji had abolished the *zamindari* or 'intermediary' status of the *khuts*, *muqaddams* and *chaudharies*, and struck a serious blow to the traditional hindu landed aristocracy. Thereafter, they might have continued to hold their hereditary family titles but we are not sure if they also continued to perform their old functions of revenue

collection without the receipt of their collection fees. This conclusion seems to be correct in the light of a meaningful statement made by Barani in the course of his narrative; he says :

> "The same rules for the collection of the tribute (taxes) applied to all alike, and the people were brought to such a state of obedience that one revenue officer would string twenty *khuts*, *muqaddams* or *chaudharies* together by the neck and enforce payment by blows."[20]

Alauddin Khalji had a vast revenue establisment; it is probable that some of the old *khuts*, *muqaddams* and *chaudharies* were enrolled as revenue collectors on the new terms and remuneration offered by the state. Alauddin enforced strict discipline among the revenue personnel; 'collectors, clerks and other officers employed in revenue matters, who took bribes and acted dishonestly, were dismissed'.[21] Barani asserts that,

> "There was no chance of a single *tanka* being taken dishonestly, or as bribery, from any hindu or mussalman. The revenue collectors and officers were so coerced and checked that for five hundred or a thousand *tankas*, they were imprisoned and kept in chains for years.....Off times fiscal officers fell into prison and had to endure blows and stripes."[22]

Such being the case, Barani's observation is correct that,

> "Men looked upon revenue officers as something worse than fever. Clerkship was a great crime, and no man would give his daughter in marriage to a clerk"[23]

We need not attach much significance to those statements of Barani which impart a communal touch to the fiscal and revenue reforms of Alauddin Khalji. He enforced these meaures over his subjects irrespective of whether they were hindus or muslims; it is just a coincidence that it were most of the hindus who were affected by his revenue policy.

Price Control and Market Regulations

Alauddin's ambition to expand his kingdom and the anxiety to protect it from the mongol menace prompted him to raise a huge standing army. Its dire necessity was felt in 1303 when he was suddenly caught between the two whirlwinds—the prestigious siege of Chittor and the mongol invasion of Delhi. Alauddin was successful in the two-pronged struggle but he made up his mind, thereafter, to recruit a permanent army 'not only large, but choice, well-armed, with archers, and all ready for immediate service'.[24] His soldiers were not an ordinary lot; they were the favoured children of the sultanate, upon whose faithful and efficient service

depended the safety of the crown; they were materially rich and lived much more comfortably than the masses. Alauddin was confronted with the problem of how to increase the strength of the armed forces on payment of a moderate salary without adversely affecting their standard of living. His successful military exploits had already resulted in the excessive flow of gold and silver in the capital and its adjoining towns. It led to the rise of prices; and with the increase of armed personnel, the circulation of money in the market and consequent rise of the price level seemed to be a natural corollary. This might, in turn, have necessitated increase in the salaries of the soldiers in the years to come. It was apprehended that, in case the sultan was called upon 'to settle a large amount of pay on the army' year after year, the royal treasury, which was full to the brim at that time, would have exhausted within five or six years.[25] The sultan was anxious to save the state economy from the vicious circle of inflation and price rise. After considerable deliberation, he introduced a salary structure in conformity with a dignified standard of living of the various categories of the soldiers. The salary of a foot soldier was fixed at 78 *tankas per annum*,[26] while a horseman, who was provided with a horse by the state, got double the amount, i.e., 156 *tankas*. If the horseman maintained his own horse (*yak aspa*) he was given 78 *tankas* extra *per annum*. The sultan desired that this salary structure should be made rigid and permanent. His 'sagacious advisers' argued that in case 'the necessaries of life could be bought at a low rate', it would be possible 'to maintain a large and permanent army' upon the scales of pay as fixed by the sultan. They further explained that 'the necessaries of life would never become cheap until the price of grain was fixed by regulations and tariffs'.[27]

Alauddin Khalji, therefore, issued a number of economic regulations to determine the prices of various necessaries of life and ensure their regular supply to the people at fixed prices and without any inconvenience.[28] The fixation of prices was not done by the sultan arbitrarily, nor was his price structure based on the fluctuating supply and demand, good or bad weather, or the speculative trends of the business community who raised or lowered the prices with motives of making the maximum profits. Instead, Alauddin Khalji fixed the price of goods on the progressive principle of 'production-cost' (*bar award*).[29] The first set of eight regulations dealt with corn and cereals. The first regulation (*zabita*) fixed the price per maund of wheat at 7.5 *jitals*,[30] barley at 4 *jitals*, while cereals like *mash* and *nukhud* were to sell at 5 *jitals* and *moth* at 3 *jitals* per maund.

The land revenue from the *khalsa* villages was realised in kind (regulation 8). The grain was stored in the state granaries and, during the days of scarcity, sold at the tarriff rates, according to the needs of the people.

Alauddin appointed Malik Qabul, an intelligent and trustworthy servant of Ulugh Khan, to be the controller of all the grain markets, called *shahna i mandi*.[31] He used to go round the markets 'in great state with many horse and foot', and was assisted in the discharge of his functions by a number of deputies and spies. Separate markets were set up for each major trade and each market was put under the charge of a *shahna* who worked in subordination to the chief controller of the markets.

All grain carriers (the *caravans*) of the empire were brought into a single corporation (*yak wajud*) under the charge of *shahna i mandi*. The merchants were registered and issued licences to bring grain from the far-off villages; the provincial and local revenue officials helped them in the procurement of grain at fixed rates.[32] It was either acquired by the state granaries or sold by the merchants in the open market at the rates dictated by the government; the merchants were allowed to charge a moderate profit plus the cost of carriage over and above their procurement price. It is said that the margin of profit, permissible to the merchants was so low that, at the initial stage, some of the *caravans* did not abide by the government regulations. Barani records that the heads of such *caravans* were brought in chains before the *shahna i mandi* and kept in confinement 'until they agreed upon one common mode of action and gave bail for each other'.[33] The grain carriers were asked to settle along with their families in the villages on the banks of the Jumna so that they might be able to transport grain to various parts of the country under the supervision of the government officials, and prevent the prices from rising above 'the royal standard'. As a result, 'so much grain found its way into the markets' that, in normal times, 'it was unnecessary to open the royal stores'.[34]

The fifth regulation provided for securing the cheapness of grain against regrating (*ihtikar*)—'buying and hoarding of goods with a view to retailing at a profit'. This rule was enforced so rigidly that no corn dealer, farmer or anyone else 'could hold back secretly a maund or half a maund of grain' and sell it for a *dang* or a *dirham* above the fixed price. The regrated grain, if discovered, was forfeited to the state and the regrator was fined.[35]

The sultan received the daily reports regarding the market rates and the transactions of goods from three distinct sources—the controllers of the markets, the *barids* and the munshis.[36] If there was any variance in these reports, the defaulters were hauled up by the sultan. According to Barani's testimony, the specified scales of prices were maintained as long as Alauddin lived, irrespective of whether the 'rains were abundant or scanty'. The unvarying price of grain in the markets was 'looked upon as one of the wonders of the time'.[37] He narrates an incident that, during a season of drought, a junior *shahna* (not Malik Qabul) of a market, once or twice 'reported that the price of grain had risen half a *jital*, and

he received twenty blows with the stick'.[38] Firishta observes, however, that

> "The prices remained fixed during this reign; in consequence of a want of water, a dearth ensued, and a difference took place in practice. It is difficult to conceive how so extraordinary a project should have been put in practice, without defeating its own end. Such a plan was neither before ever carried into effect, or (*sic*) has it been tried since; but it is confidently asserted that the orders continued throughout the reign of this monarch."[39]

The eighth regulation provided for the rationing of grain in times of drought or famine. A quantity of corn sufficient for the daily supply of each *mohalla* of the capital was consigned to the local corn dealers (*baqqals*) every day from the government stores, and half a maund was allowed to the ordinary purchasers in the markets. The people from the adjoining villages also flocked to Delhi to purchase grain at the fixed rates. If, in times of scarcity, 'any poor, reduced person' went to the market and did not get his requirement, the official incharge of the market was taken to task whenever the sultan came to know of it.[40] Of course, there were seasons of drought and shortages, but we do not hear of any large scale famine and deaths by starvation during the reign of Alauddin Khalji. It must have been made possible only by the wise economic reforms and strict control of the markets by the government. Barani is fully justified to remark 'this was indeed the wonder of the age; and no other monarch was able to affect it'.[41]

The second set of regulations were issued by the sultan for the purpose of securing low prices for cloth and groceries.[42] The extensive lawns, which had long been out of use near the Badaun gate of the capital, were converted into an open market, called the *Sarai Adal*, for the sale and purchase of these commodities. A wing of this market was reserved for all transactions in cloth, piece good and garments; it constituted 'the cloth market' which was put under the charge of *rais parwana* (permit officer). All the Indian and foreign merchants, who happened to be in the capital, were required to bring every sort of cloth to this market and sell it at the rates prescribed by the government. Like the corn dealers, the cloth merchants were also organised into a corporation; their names were registered in the office of the *rais parwana* and they had to execute bonds to the effect that they would bring specified quantities of cloth, from wherever they could find, for sale in the capital's market. The coarse cloth and garments for common use were sold at the normal rates, based on the production-cost principle [43] *albeit* this was not the case with the superior qualities of cotton cloth, silks and other luxurious wear for the aristocracy. There was usually a heavy demand for such commodities in the capital; and the labour involved in their procurement from far off

centres of specialised production in Kashmir, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Bengal, entailed heavy expenditure. These goods were, therefore, sold at subsidised rates for the benefit of the aristocracy.[44] The multani traders, who were experts in cloth trade,were advanced, at one occasion, twenty *lakhs* of *tankas* as loan to bring the costly stuff from various parts of the country and sell it in Delhi at less than the procurement price. These traders, in a way, acted simply as the commission agents for the government, and all the losses in the transaction were met by the state exchequer. Such being the case, the purchase of these commodities was rationed. Permits were issued by the *rais parwana* to the aristocracy according to their status and purse for the purchase of specified quantities of goods. Firishta states that the export of finer qualities of cloth and silks from the capital was prohibited in order to prevent the crafty businessmen from buying the stuff from Delhi at a low price and selling it at higher rates elsewhere. Firishta also has it on record that the people were not permitted to wear superior garments and silks at home, except by special permission from the sultan, 'which favour was only granted to men of rank'.[45]

The third set of regulations dealt with the sale and purchase of livestock—the horses and cattle, and the slaves. The superior brands of horses, approved for the army, were divided into three grades; their prices were fixed at 100 to 120, 80 to 90, and 65 to 70 *tankas* for the first, second and third grades respectively. An ordinary pony for common use could, however, be had for 12 to 20 *tankas* only. The government saw to it that the merchants who brought quality horses from the far off lands, should not sell them to the local dealers wholesale, so that the latter might not charge higher prices from individual customers through second sales or by playing the role of middlemen (*dalals*). The government issued permits to the local dealers and wealthy persons for the purchase of quality horses; the whole business was transacted at the market specified for the purpose, a periodical review of which was held by the sultan himself. Because of their use in the armies, the horses were regarded much more valuable than the *homo sapiens;* 'many frauds were practised in the sale and purchase of horses'. Firishta writes that a number of horse dealers, who defied the government regulations, were either put to death or whipped out of the capital.[46]

The cattle — buffaloes, cows, oxen, camels, goats, sheep, and asses, in short, every domesticated animal, could be purchased or sold only within the range of prices fixed by the government. The mamluk sultans of Delhi had brought with them the practice of enslaving the prisoners of war. Alauddin's reign was marked by continuous wars was for imperial conquests and the mongol invasion; therefore, there abundance of slaves, both male and female, in the country who were sold and purchased at nominal prices just like cattle. According to Barani, the price of a slave girl was fixed at 5 to 12 *tankas* and that of a concubine at 20 to 40 *tankas*. A

handsome young lad could be had for 20 to 30 *tankas* where as the price of slave labourers varied from 10 to 15 *tankas* each. With the consumers' goods and domestic labour so cheap, a man of moderate means, say a horsman of Alauddin's army, could afford to enjoy a happy and confortable life with one to four legally married wives, a number of concubines and a dozen of slave girls and slave labourers at his beck and call.

All the general markets of the sultanate, fell within the purveiw of the *diwan i riyasat*—'the ministry of commerce'; the office of *nazir* —'the superintendent of weights and measures' constituted a part of it. Alauddin Khalji activated this ministry by the appointment of Malik Yakub, the erstwhile *nazir*, as the *diwan i riyasat*; he was a man of honesty, and integrity, though as an administrator, he was notorious for his severity and ruthlessness. All the *shahnas* of the various markets, including Malik Qabul, the controller of grain markets, and the *rais parwana*, the incharge of the cloth market of the capital, were put under his charge. Thus the *diwan i riyasat* was made ultimately responsible for the successful implementation of the economic regulations throughout the empire.[47] To add more dignity and authority to his exalted office, Yakub was also made the *muhtasib*— 'the censor of public morals'. The statute provided severe punishments to those who flouted the economic regulations. Yakub carried out these punishments like a tyrant and struck terror in the hearts of all those who dared to defy these regulations. All the *shahnas* were supplied the price lists of major commodities as approved by the central government, while they seem to have been authorised to fix prices for the unspecified stuff within their own areas of jurisdiction on the same pattern. They moved round the markets with a body of horse and whipped the fraudulent shopkeepers publicly. Malik Yakub created quite a stir in the markets of the capital where he carried out repeated checks on all the business transactions; he did not spare the buyers or sellers, Indian traders or the foreign *caravan* leaders, for the minutest infringement of the law. The defaulters were kicked, struck with blows and sticks and flogged in the thickest of the markets. The sultan himself took pains to check up through his slave boys and maid servants that the shopkeepers did not cheat 'the poor ignorant people and children by giving them short weights; flesh was, cut off from the haunches of those who resorted to this practice. Barani gives a vivid description of this barbaric punishment being inflicted on the shopkeepers by the inspectors on the orders of the sultan, he writes:

> "The certainty of this punishment kept the traders honest, and restrained them from giving short weight, and other knavish tricks. Nay, they gave good weight, that purchasers often got somewhat in excess."[48]

Alauddin Khalji secularised politics and state administration. He oppressed the high-ups but provided great relief to the common

man. During his reign, the prices of goods were low, the food stuffs and other necessaries of life were available easily and in abundance Hoarding, blackmarketing and cheating by the business community and exploitation by middlemen was heard of no more. The roads were safe to travel, and the rule of law prevailed in every nook and corner of the sultanate. In certain matters of land reforms and socio-economic policies, Alauddin Khalji anticipated. Sher Shah Sur; his administrative set up carried the seeds of a progressive and secular state, which, given the peace and stability for two or three generations more, could have ushered in an era of peace and prosperity, and advanced the progress of the country by at least two centuries.

It is an irony of fate that the grand edifice of state-controlled economy, built by Alauddin Khalji on brute force, tumbled down like a house of cards with the disappearance of that masterly hand; the whole lot of economic regulations died with the sultan almost instantaneously, resulting in the spread of utter confusion and economic anarchy in the country.

Social Content of the Deccan Policy of Alauddin Khalji

The credit for the spread of Islam as a political force in the Deccan goes to Alauddin Khalji. The first expedition to Deogiri, modern Daulatabad in Maharshtra, was led by him in 1296 when he was a governor of Kara (Allahabad) and Oudh during the reign of Jalaluddin Khalji. Barani tells us that before that daring exploit of Alauddin 'the people of that country (Deogiri) had never heard of the mussalmans; the maratha land had never been punished by the muslim armies; no mussalman king or prince had penetrated so far. Deogiri was exceedingly rich in gold and silver, jewels and other valuables'.[49] In a surpise attack on the maratha kingdom with 8,000 mobile cavalry, Alauddin humbled the pride of *raja* Ramchandra Deva and extracted from him a huge war indemnity, besides the promise to pay the revenues of Ellichpur region as tribute year after year. He returned to Kara, laden with booty, which included 600 *maunds* of gold, 1000 *maunds* of silver, seven *maunds* of pearls, two *maunds* of diamonds, rubies and other precious stones, and 4,000 pieces of silk-stuff besides horses, elephants and slaves.[50] The success of his enterprise, resulting in the acquisition of huge wealth, turned the head of the youthful and ambitious prince who, soon afterwards, murdered his uncle and usurped the throne. Deogiri's gold enabled him to acquire the throne; it inspired him to transform his kingdom into an all-India empire. The conquest of the Deccan constituted but an indispensable part of his imperial policy. Deogiri to Alauddin Khalji was a gateway to the treasure-trove of the legendary 'forty thieves' and the sultan was ever eager to possess the treasure by playing the role of *Ali Baba*. In the opinion of the author, it was Alauddin's dream of possessing the wealth of the Deccan which turned that ambitious youth into a great imperialist, and the conquest of Rajputana and central India simply enabled him to

bridge the gulf between Delhi and the Vindhyas. The conquest of the Deccan was foremost in his mind ever since he secured the crown. Therefore, while the conquest of northern India was progressing satisfactorily, Alauddin was in touch with all the developments that had been taking place in the south. Long before he launched a full-fledged campaign for the conquest of the Deccan, he had educated himself with the knowledge of its topography, ascertained the routes leading to the principal towns, and acquired intelligence about the military prowess and treasures of the hindu adversaries who sat on the thrones of the southern kingdoms. Besides Ramchandra Deva of Devagiri, there were three other prominent kings of the south—Pratap Rudra Deva II of the Kakatiya dynasty had his headquarters at Warrangal (Telengana), Vir Ballala III of the Hoysalas at Dwarsamudra, and Kulashekhar Pandya of the far south at Madura. These rulers, like the rajput chieftains of northern India, did not see eye to eye with each other. They being devoid of a good neighbourly sense, constantly engaged themselves in mutual feuds and self-destructive fratricidal wars. It was therefore, not very difficult to knock them down one by one.

Rajputana and Malwa had been conquered; all the routes leading to the south secured by Alauddin Khalji by the year 1305. The mongol invasions had been beaten off by him with a firm hand Alauddin's 4,75,000 well-equipped standing army had to be usefully employed if it was to be kept under effective control. A wholesale invasion of the Deccan, therefore lay in the logic of history. A few immediate considerations helped in the materialisation of the Deccan campaigns in 1306-7. Alauddin's extensive economic reforms, the vast expansion of the administration and the practice of paying salaries in cash to the soldiers as well as bureaucracy increased the demand for gold and silver; the desire to secure the precious metals from the south, therefore, became a dire necessity to replenish the state treasury and lubricate the war machine. To all these factors were added a couple of plausible excuses to initiate a military campaign by Alauddin Khalji against Ramchandra Deva of Devagiri in 1306-7. He called back surplus contingents of soldiers from the northwestern frontier and constituted them into 'an army of the Deccan' under the command of Malik Kafur, a brilliant hindu slave from Gujarat, who had fallen into the hands of slave traders in his childhood and castrated; he had by then come to occupy the exalted office of the *malik naib*, 'the deputy sultan'. He was destined to conquer the whole of south India under the direction and control of Alauddin Khalji. Ramchandra suffered defeat and sued for peace; he gave one of his daughters in marriage to Alauddin Khalji and acknowledged his vassalage. According to Barani, 'the *Rai* was, ever afterwards obedient, and sent his tribute regularly as long as he lived'.[51] He collaborated wholeheartedly with the imperial armies in the conquest of south India. The matrimonial relationship established between the ruling houses of Delhi and Devagiri crossed the

religious barriers; Ramchandra became a part and parcel of the imperial power of India and rendered maximum assistance to Alauddin Khalji in the expansion of his imperial sway over the south. This relationship is interpreted differently by different critics. It is held that Alauddin's policy towards Ramchandra was based on political expediency; as a clever politician and diplomat, Alauddin won over the loyalty of the Yadav chief and then used him as a tool in the fulfilment of his aggressive designs. According to some critics, Ramchandra was a coward who compromised his independence, honour and self-respect in order to preserve his throne and the other material gains. Not only this; having disgraced himself, he shamelessly helped the aggressors in trampling the whole of southern India under their heels. Ramchandra let down his own people, disgraced his religion and did incalculable harm to his own society and culture, of which he was expected to champion the cause. His cowardly conduct had a highly demoralising effect on the hindus of south India, in general, and their rulers, in particular.

In 1309-10, Malik Kafur led a second 'army of Islam', comprising a hundred thousand soldiers, now for the conquest of Warrangal. The imperial army marched through Devagiri and Ramchandra Deva rendered every type of assistance to it. He entertained Malik Kafur and other imperial nobles with great hospitality, provided fodder for the animals and provisions for the soldiers. While the army was marching through his territories, he remained continuously in attendance upon Malik Kafur and met with all the commissariat requirements of the invader ; he ordered his merchants to set up bazars all along the route of the army 'with strict instructions to sell everything according to the sultan's established prices in his dominions'.[52] Ramchandra deputed his scouts to guide the imperial army *en route* to Warrangal. As soon as Kafur reached the frontiers of Telingana, he issued orders to lay waste the country with fire and sword. According to Firishta, 'this confounded the inhabitants who had never injured their wanton enemies'.[53] The invaders met with resistance at the fort of Sirpur manned by a small contingent of the hindu soldiers. All of its defenders died in action while their ladies, along with their children, perished in the self-lit fire of *jauhar*. After a brief but deadly struggle, Rai Pratap Rudra Deva II purchased peace by surrendering 100 elephants,[54] 7,000 horses and an immense treasure of gold, silver and jewels of incalculable value ; it included the famous *jauhar*—later called the *Koh i Noor*. The Rai did not meet Malik Kafur *albeit* he sent his man-size statue, made of gold, with a golden chain round its neck in acknowledgement of his submission ; he also promised in writing to send the annual tribute to the imperial court regularly. Laden with booty, Malik Kafur returned to Delhi on June 11, 1310 to the great delight of Alauddin Khalji.

Flushed with the joy of an easy victory at Warrangal, Alauddin Khalji became impatient to spread his imperial sawy over the whole of the southern peninsula without much loss of time. Malik Kafur was even more enthusiastic than his master for the enterprising campaign ; within four months of his return from Warrangal, he was ready for his third expedition to the south. The trigger-happy soldiers vied with one another in getting themselves listed in 'the army of Islam' for *jehad* against the infidels; the memories of the times of Mahmud of Ghazni were revived. The terms like *Islam* and *jehad* were, however, used in a most casual manner ; as a matter of fact, everyone from the sultan to the rank and file, was tempted only by the glamour of loot and plunder The expedition was originally directed against the kingdom of Dwarsamudra but the sultan set the guidelines of the campaign only ; Malik Kafur was allowed ample discretion to execute it in any way he thought fit. The imperial army left Delhi in November 1310 and was accorded reception by Ramchandra of Devagiri in February 1311 As usual, he provided all the facilities for its onward march into the kingdom of Dwarsamudra. The Hoysala ruler Vir Ballala III was terrified into submission after a brief show of resistance ; he surrendered his elephants . horses and the treasure and offered to pay the annual tribute to Delhi.

It was at Dwarsamudra that Malik Kafur learnt about the outbreak of a fratricidal war between the two Pandya princes in the far south. Kulashekhar, the Pandya ruler of Madura, was inclined more favourably towards his elder but natural son Vir Pandya and this excited the jealousies of his younger but legitimate son Sunder Pandya. Sunder murdered his father in a fit of anger and claimed the throne for himself but was turned out of Madura by Vir Pandya. Hard-pressed, Sunder Pandya appealed to Malik Kafur, who was then stationed at Dwarsamudra, for help. This provided a golden opportunity to the latter to lead a contingent of the imperial troops into the far south. He was faithfully assisted by Vir Ballala III in this enterprise. Vir Pandya fled the capital on the approach of the imperial army which overran the Pandya kingdom, apparently in search of the fugitive prince, and plundered all the important towns and temples that fell its way. Having realised his folly, though very late, Sunder Pandya also left the imperialists and fled to the jungles. According to Firishta, Malik Kafur reached as far as Rameshwaram where he erected a mosque in honour of the victory of Islam. Nevertheless, both of the Pandya princes eluded him and none made a formal treaty of surrender, nor recognised the paramountcy of Alauddin Khalji over the dominions of Madura. The campaign proved, however, most fruitful from the point of view of material gains; Malik Kafur returned to Delhi on October 18. 1311, with 612 elephants, 96,000 *maunds* of gold, 20,000 horses and several chests of precious stones of incalculable value; [55] Amir Khusrau gives the weight of jewels and pearls at 500 *maunds*. As a matter of fact, the booty from

Dwarsamudra and Madura defied all description and estimates in terms of its monetary value ; Alauddin's life-long acquisitions, including the spoils of Devagiri, paled into insignificance before it. It may well have turned Mahmud of Ghazni in his grave 'with wistful' eyes'.[56] Vir Ballala III accompanied Malik Kafur to Delhi and received a very generous treatment from Alauddin Khalji; after Ramchandra Deva, he became the second most useful and obedient vassal of the sultanate in the south. But for the active collaboration of the hindu chieftains and their feudal nobility, the conquest of the Deccan might not have been accomplished by Alauddin Khalji during his life-time. The hindu civilisation and culture of southern India fell a victim to the rising tide of Islam for which none else but their own ruling elite or the indigenous socio-political leaders were primarily responsible. There is no denying the fact that Alauddin Khalji played a very significant role in the spread of Islam in south India as a political as well as social force, with the active assistance of hindu feudal lords and the selfish leadership of the indigenous population. Betrayed by their selfish and coward socio-political leaders, the stupefied and helpless hindu masses could do nothing else but offer abject surrender to the victors and curse their fate or evil stars that had brought about the ruin of their much-cherished religious and cultural heritage.

3. Social Content in the State Policies of the Tughluqs

Domestic Policy of Ghiasuddin Tughluq

The establishment of the Tughluq dynasty at Delhi in 1320 marks a further development in the internal social organisation of the muslims. Like the Khaljis, the tughluqs also belonged to the non-privileged section of the turkish founders of the sultanate. They constituted an offshoot of the *qarauna* tribe of the turks who lived in the mountainous region, lying between Sind and Turkistan; the term *qarauna* was used, during that age, for the people of a mixed race—the descendants of mongol or turkish fathers and non-turkish mothers.[57] Ghiasuddin Tughluq, the founder of the new dynasty, checked the political anarchy which had engulfed the sultanate after the death of Alauddin Khalji. The discipline, efficiency and integrity of the civil services of Alauddin's days could not be restored; nevertheless, Ghiasuddin improved the general tone of administration by imparting to it a bit of soldier's touch, and the police and judicial arrangements made by him won applause from all quarters. The sudden collapse of Alauddin's economic regulations had adverse effects on agricultural production and public economy. Ghiasuddin Tughluq attempted to restore economic order and increase agricultural production in his own way. The progressive land revenue system, initiated by Alauddin Khalji had already been discarded by his son and successor Mubarak Shah Khalji (1316-20) ; it was given a formal burial by

Ghiasuddin Tughluq who gave up the measurement of land as the basis for the assessment of government demand. The extensive revenue establishment of Alauddin's regime was simply unintelligible to him ; its staff was reduced and survey of land became a forgotten story. Nevertheless, Ghiasuddin Tughluq took keen interest in the extension of agriculture by encouraging the cultivators to bring the unreclaimed lands under the plough and repopulate the deserted villages. The state demand was reduced and a principle laid that the land revenue should not be enhanced 'whether upon the reports of informers or the statements of valuers by more than one-eleventh of the estimated produce at a time. The sultan was conscious of the fact that 'countries are ruined, and are kept in poverty by excessive taxation and the exorbitant demands of kings'.[58] The oppressive methods adopted by Alauddin Khalji for the collection of revenue were given up; on the other hand, the revenue officials were issued instructions that

> "The revenue should be collected in such a way that the *raiyats* should increase their cultivation; that the lands already in cultivation might be kept so, and some little be added to them every year. So much was not to be exacted at once that the cultivation should fall off and no increase be made in future."[59]

Ghiasuddin Tughluq took interest in the construction of canals for irrigation; the peasants were given relief in times of drought. The sympathetic attitude of the sultan towards the cultivators helped in the rehabilitation of the countryside and increased agricultural production. The sultan improved the means of communications by clearing and levelling the roads which had been neglected since the death of Alauddin Khalji. He revived the postal services of Alauddin Khalji's regime, repaired the forts, constructed bridges, laid out gardens and initiated other works of public utility All these measures restored the credit of the government among the people and 'inspired' Amir Khusrau to sing the praise of sultan Ghiasuddin Tughluq in the following words :

> "He never did anything that was not replete with wisdom and sense;
> He might be said to wear a hundred doctors' hoods under his crown."[60]

Policies and Projects of Muhammad bin Tughluq

Muhammad bin Tughluq (1325-51), the eldest son and successor of Ghiasuddin Tughluq, was the most highly educated of all the preceding sultans of Delhi. A scholar of Persian and Arabic, he was well-read in the subjects of astronomy, philosophy, mathematics, medicine and logic. He was a man of high moral character who left nothing to be desired from the point of view of academic

and intellectual attainments. His reign started with everything in his favour. He succeeded a capable monarch who had enjoyed the confidence of his people. He inherited a vast empire from his illustrious father, to the consolidation of which he had personally made substantial contribution. Peace and tranquillity prevailed in the sultanate, the distant provinces were under the effective control of the centre, and the royal treasury was full to the brim. With these assets, the youthful and energetic monarch was expected to do better than the earlier sultans of Delhi. Muhammad bin Tughluq was fully conscious of the supreme powers and resources wielded by him; he was rather over confident of his capabilities to make the best use of these as a sovereign. He was an abstract thinker and an innovator in the field of state polity *albeit* he was an idealist, and not a practical statesman; therefore, the radical changes brought about by him in the state policy foundered against the rocks of improbability. Like Alauddin Khalji, he was a great imperialist who was eager to extend his sway over the whole of the Indian subcontinent. He believed in the geopolitical entity of India and the oneness of its people, and had a clear concept about the political unity of the country. Muhammad bin Tughluq wanted to break the barriers between the north and the south, and stood for the extension of direct administrative control of the central government over all parts of India by eliminating the regional states and feudal principalities. He threw open higher services to all the Indians on merit and did not discriminate between the hindus and the muslims in matters of state policy. In his political outlook, Muhammad bin Tughluq was unique among the sultans of Delhi; he was definitely a man with ideas far ahead of his times. Accordingly, Muhammad bin Tughluq has been 'represented by contemporaries as one of the wonders of the age in which he lived'.[61] Of all the sultans of Delhi, he is perhaps the most grossly misunderstood monarch. His lofty designs and ambitious projects were beyond the comprehension of the bureaucracy as well as the subjects. Barani, Ibn Battuta and Isami could not understand him either; no wonder, they took a prejudicial view of his character and administrative policies. Barani was, in fact, so much obsessed with the 'five ambitious projects' of Muhammad bin Tughluq that he did not care to give a systematic narrative of his reign in chronological order. Again, instead of tracing the genesis of these projects and giving the analysis of the causes leading to their failure, he dwells on their disastrous effects by giving an exaggerated account of the sufferings of the people and the ruthless persecutions of the sultan. So also is the case with the chronicles of Ibn Battuta and Isami. As a matter of fact, the so-called 'hair-brain schemes' of Muhammad bin Tughluq carried the rudiments of modernity and national integration *albeit* he failed to convince his people of their significance, and himself lacked the skill to implement them for the benefit of the people. The period of rule of Muhammad bin Tughluq constitutes, therefore, one of the most tragic chapters in the history of early medieval India; it is a sad

commentary on the well-intentioned but incompetent monarch, and corrupt, selfish and shortsighted bureaucracy who were called upon to rule the unimaginative and backward masses. Three of his great projects, viz; the transfer of capital to Devagiri, token currency, and the taxation in the Doab, had a direct bearing on the social and economic life of the people, a detailed account of which would be quite appropriate in this study.

Transfer of the Capital (1326-27)

The first[62] grand project, conceived by Muhammad bin Tughluq, was to transfer his capital from Delhi to Devagiri, which was renamed Daulatabad. What was foremost in the mind of the sultan, when he thought of such a move, cannot be ascertained from the contemporary sources. It is, however, a fact that Muhammad bin Tughluq, while a crown prince (his original name was Jauna Khan), had formed close associations with the Deccan. He led two expeditions to Warrangal and, after his hard-earned victory, annexed the hindu kingdom to the sultanate. But for the keen interest taken by Ghiasuddin Tughluq and the victory scored by Jauna Khan, the whole of southern peninsula might have slipped out of the control of the newly established Tughluq dynasty. After his accession to the throne, Muhammad bin Tughluq faced the first revolt at the hands of Bahauddin in Gurshasp, governor of Sagar, who had developed contacts with some hindu feudal chiefs of the Deccan. The sultan was constrained to shift his headquarters temporarily to Devagiri which had already been brought under the direct civil administrative control of the sultanate since the concluding days of Alauddin Khalji. A little carelessness or weakness on the part of Muhammad bin Tughluq in dealing with the revolt of Gurshasp could have triggered off rebellions in other parts of the peninsula. With this background in view, we can enumerate the plausible considerations which might have led Muhammad bin Tughluq to transfer his capital Daulatabad. The sultan was a man of ideas who did not hesitate to break with old traditions and conventions in state craft and civil administration. As a great visionary, he believed in the political unity of the Indian subcontinent and desired to bring the entire country under the effective control of a central authority. He wished the sultanate to play this grandiose role as a unifying force. Delhi was situated far away from the south which tempted the feudal chieftains and governors of the sultans to defy the imperial authority. His first Warrangal expedition (1321-22) had failed simply because of the fact that his communications with Delhi were cut off for a couple of weeks which resulted in the spread of rumours and disaffection among his soldiers. Muhammad bin Tughluq did not want such a mishap to be repeated again. Since the conquest of southern India by Malik Kafur under Alauddin Khalji and the inflow of its wealth, lubricating the wheels of the sultanate, the centre of gravity of the Indian politics had definitely shifted to the south.

Muhammad bin Tughluq attached greater importance to his southern possessions than the Punjab and Sind which had been ravaged by a century of mongol inroads. Muhammad bin Tughluq was eager to utilise the immense gold, silver, precious stones and untapped resources of the south to enrich the sultanate. While at Devagiri, he was fascinated with the pleasant climate, rich agricultural products and flourishing trade and commerce of Maharashtra where his stay must have been made much more comfortable than at Delhi by the hospitality of the maratha officials of the sultanate. Barani offers the only explanation in support of the sultan's project that Daulatabad held a central situation'.[63] Firishta, though writing long afterwards, makes an observation:

> "The king was so much pleased with the situation and strength of Dewgur (Devagiri or Daulatabad) and considered it so much more centrical than Delhi that he determined to make it his capital.''[64]

Daulatabad was in no way situated in the heart of Muhammad bin Tughluq's empire; it was not equidistant from the northwestern, eastern and southern boundaries of the sultanate. If the sultan attributed a 'central' position to Devagiri, it could be justified only when he attached little importance to his dominions, situated to the east and northwest of Delhi. Of course, Delhi being located close to the northwestern frontier of India, was frequently exposed to the foreign invasion whereas Devagiri was free from this menace; the latter enjoyed a more strategic location and could be defended better. We need not believe Ibn Battuta when he says that sultan wanted to punish the people of Delhi because they used to write anonymous letters full of abuse to him.[65] Similarly, Isami's contention that the sultan distrusted the people (*khalq*) of Delhi and wanted to break their power by uprooting them from their hearths and homes, is not very convincing unless we define the people to be the nobility or aristocracy of the capital. The political environment of Delhi in the beginning of Muhammad bin Tughluq's reign does not warrant such an inference.

A modern historiographer, on the testimony of *Siyarul Auliya*, opines that Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq intended to 'solve the Deccan problem' by making Devagiri 'a centre of muslim culture through the plantation of a colony of the mussalmans' there; he observes:

> "One of the factors controlling the situation in the Deccan was the scarcity of the mussalmans — a fact which made it so tempting to the hindu rulers to revolt, and so difficult for the emperor of Delhi immediately to control the situation from so great a distance. At the slightest outbreak of trouble in any part of the Deccan, either a capable general had to be sent from Delhi or the emperor himself had to march in person."[66]

The argument does not stand the test of historical investigation. It was no hindu chief but a prominent muslim noble Bahauddin Gurshasp who, instead of championing the cause of Islamic unity on behalf of the sultanate, had raised the first standard of revolt against Muhammad bin Tughluq. The feudal hindu chiefs and ambitious muslim nobles stood at par with one another in the matter of defying the authority of an autocratic police state that the sultanate of Delhi was Muhammad bin Tughluq was not a communalist but an imperialist with a clearer political vision than what was possessed by the other sultans of Delhi. His failure as a ruler need not distract us from the real aims and objects that underlay his Deccan policy. The increase in the numerical strength of muslims and the spread of Islamic culture in the south were the indirect results of his move which was political in nature.

Firishta has it on record that 'on proposing this subject to his ministers, the majority were of the opinion that Oojein (Ujjain) was a more proper place for that purpose'.[67] As an autocrat and self-willed ruler, however, Muhammad bin Tughluq brushed aside the advice of his ministers and 'without carefully looking into the advantages and disadvantages on every side',[68] decided to transfer the capital to Daulatabad. No wonder, he had to pay a heavy price for having disregarded the advice of the counsellors.

The 'exodus' to Daulatabad took place in two phases. At first the imperial court and establishment shifted to the new capital. The nobles moved out grudgingly while the cream of the aristocracy, comprising the *sayyad*, *sheikhs*, *ulama*, traders and businessmen showed disinclination to vacate the historic city of Delhi 'which for 170 or 180 years had grown in prosperity and rivalled Baghdad and Cairo'.[69] This enraged the sultan who issued orders for the general migration of the aristocracy of Delhi to Daulatabad; the incident took place about a yeat after the first phase of migration. Isami says that six *caravans* were composed of the people who were forced to move to the Daccan against their will. The step was deeply resented by the aristocracy and made the sultan an object of hatred and despise by all and sundry. It was not, however, a mass migration of the populace of Delhi; the hindus, in general, were not affected by it nor were the muslim masses compelled to take the road to the south. It were essentially the upper classes of Delhi who fell a victim to the whims of the despotic ruler; they were uprooted from their ancestral land; many suffered great hardships and some were actually ruined. Coercion was employed against those who disobeyed the sultan's orders; some were mercilessly dragged out of their homes and punished. However, the harrowing tales of mass migration as narrated by Barani, Ibn Battuta, and Isami are not literally correct; these became current among the people as an expression of the sentiments of resentment and disgust against the high handed action of the sultan. The city of Delhi was not evacuated completely, *albeit*, on being deprived

of its royal patrons and aristocracy, it lost its former pomp, grandeur and prosperity.

Once the decision had been taken, the sultan made elaborate arrangements to execute the plan. The seven hundred mile long trunk road (*shahrah*) between Delhi and Devagiri had already been well developed since the days of Alauddin Khalji. Halting camps were set up all along the route for the stay of the emigrants where free food, drinking water and other amenities were made available for them. An efficient postal and intelligence service was established and state troops posted *en route* to Daulatabad to protect the life and property of the travellers. Ibn Battuta reveals that the sultan had purchased all the houses and dwellings of those who were asked to shift to the south; they were provided free board and lodging on arrival in Daulatabad and granted free land and other facilities for the construction of their houses and business concerns. Barani has it that 'the sultan was bounteous in his liberality and favours to the emigrants, both on their journey and on their arrival' at Daulatabad. Notwithstanding all that the sultan had done to help the emigrants, they suffered tremendously from severe mental strain, privation and fatigue.[70]

Daulatabad did not prove an ideal capital for the vast turkish empire of India. Delhi as the imperial capital did have some shortcomings, and the original idea of locating a more centrally situated headquarters was not illogical; *albeit* the choice of Devagiri was wrong. It did not fulfil the requirements which necessitated this change. Being situated far away from the northwestern frontier and Bengal, it could not serve as an adequate base for the establisment of an effective control over northwestern and eastern India. To his great chagrin, Muhammad bin Tughluq had to move like a shuttle-cock between Delhi and Daulatabad to solve the various administrative and political problems.

The historic importance of Delhi could not be reduced by an executive action alone. Delhi was associated with the foundation of the sultanate, and it had enjoyed the reputation as its metropolis throughout the muslim world for over two centuries. Muhammad bin Tughluq realised this bitter truth only after he had shifted to Daulatabad. Moreover, in spite of the liberal patronage extended by the sultan to the emigrants, many of them did not feel at home in the south; their emotional and sentimental attachment with Delhi could not be cut off. They felt themselves as strangers in 'an infidel land' and continued to grumble against the sultan who had lost their confidence and goodwill; they came to constitute a permanently disgruntled and disaffected lot who did not cooperate with the sultan willingly and sincerely in the management of the state affairs. It had an adverse effect on the administration, and it gave a serious setback to the dignity and prestige of the sultan. Within two or three years, Muhammad bin Tughluq realised his folly and brought back the imperial court to Delhi without any

fanfare. General permission was granted to the emigrants to come back to Delhi in 1335-36 but much before that stage Delhi had already become the hub of political and socio-cultural activities of the sultanate once again. Ibn Battuta who came to Delhi in 1334 found it in a fairly flourishing condition.

Abbas, the author of *Masalik ul Absar*, an arabic work, compiled about a decade after the so-called evacuation and destruction of Delhi, mentions that the sultanate of Delhi had two capitals—Delhi and Devagiri or Qabbatul Islam—'the metropolis of Islam'. The two cities were connected with each other. Whenever something special happened in a city or when the gates of the capital where the sultan was not present, were opened in the morning and closed at night, the drums were beaten in rapid succession from posting station to posting station. In this manner, the sultan came to know every day the time of opening and closing of the gates of the capital lying at a distance of about seven hundred miles from his place of residence.[71] Similarly, the recent discovery of a couple of coins, minted almost simultaneously at Delhi and Daulatabad, carry the inscriptions on them as *Takhtgah i Delhi* and *Takhtgah i Daulatabad* respectively.[72] Such being the case, we have reasons to believe that the unprecedented project conceived by Muhammad bin Tughluq was not scrapped altogether. The original plan misfired and was universally condemned by the people essentially because of its dictatorial implementation; the sultan crippled a wise project by its hasty implementation and the use of brute force thereafter. Notwithstanding the personal and autocratic element which constituted but a part of the general nature of medieval Indian monarchical hierarchy, the importance of Daulatabad as the second headquarters of the empire was confirmed by experience, and the original plan was modified to suit the exigencies of the times. The ancient Indian monarchs did have more than one capital to control their vast Indian dominions. Considered from this angle, Muhammad bin Tughluq made a great contribution to the concept of medieval Indian polity, and anticipated the British who started with Calcutta as the capital, situated on the eastern fringe of the country, and subsequently developed Simla to be the second headquarters of their Indian empire.

The immediate effect of Muhammad bin Tughluq's transfer of the capital was disastrous. It reduced the prestige and prosperity of Delhi though for a shortwhile. The aristocracy of Delhi were uprooted from their hearths and homes and many of them put to great inconvenience. The execution of the plan must have put a tremendous strain on the administrative machinery as well as the state treasury. The sultan lost respect in the estimation of the people and could never win back their confidence all his life. The bad execution of the project therefore resulted in the greatest personal loss to the sultan. The long-range effects of his experiment proved, however, to be marvellous. The socio-cultural barriers between the

north and the south were broken. A large number of the muslim elite migrated to the south and made permanent settlement there; they received lucrative government assignments, free land and estates and gradually came to acquire a dominant position among the aristocracy of the Deccan. The propagation of Islam among the indigenous population received impetus and the numerical strength of the muslims beyond the Vindhyas increased considerably. Thus the Deccan became a stronghold of the muslims. Whether Muhammad bin Tughluq originally conceived it or not, he became indirectly responsible for plantation of the muslim faith and Islamic culture in the south. It would not be wrong to say that Alauddin Khalji had carried the muslim arms to the south whereas Muhammad bin Tughluq installed the banner of Islamic religion and culture there. The initial project of the sultan failed and, in the long run, he lost his hold over the southern dominions, but the Deccan continued to be the stronghold of muslim power; it led to the birth of the Bahmani kingdom during the very life-time of Muhammad bin Tughluq.

Token Currency of Muhammad bin Tughluq

Introduction of token currency was the second[73] unprecedented project launched by Muhammad bin Tughluq. That it is esssentially a modern concept does not need much elaboration; we live in the age of token currency where the mere contemplation of the intrinsic value of paper notes and coins may be dubbed idiotic. Muhammad bin Tughluq, on the other hand, earned the nickname of 'a fool' because he conceived of such an advanced measure to revolutionise the Indian economy in the fourteenth century. He has been described by Edward Thomas as 'the prince of moneyers'.[74] Soon after accession, he made sweeping reforms in the system of coinage. He fixed the relative values of the precious metals and issued various types of coins with the object of facilitating exchange and circulation. The introduction of token currency was, however, his most significant innovation in the history of medieval India coinage. Like Kublai Khan (1260-94) of China and Gai Khatu (1293 A.D) of Persia, Muhammad bin Tughluq issued orders that *tankas* of bronze[75] be minted and used for and at par with the silver *tankas*.

Various reasons have been forwarded by different writers, contemporary as well as modern, for this novel experiment of Muhammad bin Tughluq. The underlying theme of Barani's account is that the financial stringency of the state had compelled the sultan to take this step. There may be some truth in it, but Barani's statement that, on account of the failure of his taxation policy in the Doab and the subsequent famine in northern India, the state treasury was emptied, is wrong. In reality, the Doab episode (1335-36) had taken place after the failure of the experiment in token currency (1330-32). The fact that the sultan had

subsequently paid back to the public, gold and silver coins in return for the token currency and managed a most difficult situation with astonishing success, leads us to the conclusion that the financial difficulty was not the reason for the introduction of token currency; on the other hand, the failure of the experiment must have resulted in the financial bankruptcy of the state.

Though Muhammad bin Tughluq had inherited a well-filled treasury from his father, he was always anxious to find out new ways and means of improving the financial condition of the state. Firishta rightly tells us that the sultan introduced token currency because he wished to augment his resources in order to carry into effect his wild plans of conquest and administrative reforms which appealed so powerfully to his ambitious nature. Ishwara Topa was probably the first among the modern historiographers to infer that the shortage of silver was the most important reason for this measure. In medieval India silver was most extensively used for coinage; the gold coins were not very common. The increasing trade and commerce and the vast dimensions of the Tughluq empire increased the demand for silver. The disbursement of incalculable amounts of silver coins to the imperial armies and civil services created a problem similar to that which Alauddin Khalji had also to face once. The latter had met it by lowering the salaries of the soldiers and controlling the prices of the commodities. Muhammad bin Tughluq did not want, however, to revive the Khalji horror. He met the problem of the scarcity of silver by three methods. First, he raised the price of silver in relation to gold. The relative value of gold and silver was reduced to the ratio of seven to one instead of ten to one which generally prevailed during the reigns of his predecessors. Second, he increased the weight of gold coins and reduced that of the silver ones. Under Alauddin Khalji, gold and silver *tankas* weighed 175 grains each; Muhammad bin Tughluq introduced in their place, gold *dinar* of 200 grains and silver *adali* of 144 grains. It clearly shows that, as compared with gold, there was relative scarcity of silver in the country under Muhammad bin Tughluq's reign. Third, in order to compensate for the shortage of silver, he started token currency which was to be treated at par with silver currency. Above all, Muhammad bin Tughluq possessed originality of thought and loved experimenatation. He wanted to open a new chapter in the history of coinage in India. He was fully aware of the success of token currency in China and decided to try the experiment without the slightest intention of defrauding or cheating his own subjects as alleged by the contemporary writers.

Muhammad bin Tughluq made the bronze coins as the legal tender in about 1330 A.D.; and put them at par, in value, with the silver coins. The fundamental principle of his token currency was the same as that of the modern paper and metallic currency. The intrinsic value of the bronze coins was insignificant but they were

issued on government credit. The scheme was 'on the whole quite good and statesmanlike' but bad execution led to its failure in spite of the best intentions of the sultan. Unfortunately, Muhammad bin Tughluq did not take steps to make the mint the monopoly of the state nor there was any elaborate machinery to prepare the standard coins. Any goldsmith could produce as good a coin as the royal token. Edward Thomas observes that,

> "There was no special machinery to make the difference of the fabric of the royal mint and the handiwork of the moderately skilled artisan. Unlike the precautions taken to prevent the imitation of the Chinese paper notes, there was positively no check on the authenticity of the copper token, and no limit to the power of production by the masses at large".[76]

Barani does not exaggerate the point when he says that the 'house of every hindu[77] was turned into a mint', and the people, including muslims, of course, began to forge the coins on an extensive scale. They 'turned their utensils into coins and with these they paid their tribute (taxes) and with these they purchased horses, arms and fine things of all kinds. The *rais*, the village headman and landowners grew rich and strong upon these copper coins but the state was impoverished ..... . Every goldsmith struck copper coins in his workshop, and the treasury with these copper coins.'[78] Foreign merchants purchased Indian goods with the token currency in vogue but refused to accept the latter while selling their goods; it led to the spread of confusion and discontent in the country. The people held back gold and silver coins and, at the same time, hesitated in dealing with token coins which 'were not valued more than pebbles or potsherds'.[79] Barani states that the coins of gold and silver, because of 'great scarcity, rose fourfold and fivefold in value. Trade was interrupted on every side',[80] and all transactions in money came to a standstill.

Never was so wise a measure of reform so cruelly frustrated than this experiment in token currency. The sultan was compelled to order for the withdrawal of token currrency after it had been in use for about two years (1330-32). He recalled all the token coins, exchanging each for the silver one; the people got gold and silver in exchange for all such coins whether genuine or forged. Barani writes:

> "So many of these copper *tankas* were brought to the treasury that heaps of them rose up in Tughluqabad like mountains. Great sums went out of the treasury in exchange for the copper, and a great deficiency was caused. When the sultan found that his project had failed, and that great loss had been entailed upon the treasury through his copper coins, he more than ever turned against his subjects".[81]

Thus the discredited token currency having been recalled, all forgery stopped and the credit of the government restored. The storm blew over, the panic ended and the people grew rich at the cost of the state so much so that not even 'a murmur' about the affair was heard by Ibn Battuta who came to India shortly afterwards. Abbas, the author of the *Masalik ul Absar*, also knew nothing about it. The above-mentioned statement of Barani, however, needs a comment; it contradicts his earlier odservation that Muhammad bin Tughluq had adopted token currency to refill his empty treasury. Had that been the case, he could not have afforded to buy back token coins, including millions of the forged ones, in exchange for gold and silver. As a matter of fact, the sultan displayed a rare type of patience, courage and sportsman's spirit in winding up a project which had failed not only because of bad execution by the state but also because of the dishonesty of his people. He was full of remorse for having mishandled a wisely conceived project and readily atoned for the acts of omission and commission of his subjects too. The whole episode is a sad commentary on the incompetence of the ruler and irresponsible conduct of his subjects; both the parties were equally to blame.

In addition to the well-known causes, such as forgery by the people, the absence of any elaborate machinery to prepare standard coins, the sultan's failure to monopolise the mint or stop the forgery by devising special methods for the detection of the forged coins, and the corruption of the state officials who were most probably in league with the malcontents, some other important factors were also responsible for the failure of the measure. Token currency, for its success, requires the permanent credit of the government. In medieval India, the muslim dynasties were always changing. The people could not hope that the successors of Muhammad bin Tughluq or the subsequent rulers of the new dynasties would ever accept these token coins as legal tender. Second, there was already an abundance of fractional currency of copper *jitals*, etc; the people accepted it because its exchange value was not very high. The token currency was, however, to be treated at par with the silver currency. The illiterate and unimaginative masses could not understand the difference between the two and were simply confused. They thought that the sultan intended to rob them. Third, there being no understanding or agreement with foreign governments regarding the exchange value of the token currency, the foreign merchants were in the right when they refused to accept bronze coins in their business transactions. No other state, whether in India or abroad, would have shown any consideration for the token currency of Muhammad bin Tughluq in those days Last but not least, the price of metals depended on the law of supply and demand, and could not be fixed by royal enactments. The sultan roused discontent by disregarding this law in raising the price of silver of his own sweet will. Muhammad bin Tughluq's measure

of token currency was much in advance of the age ; under the circumstances, it was bound to fail and it is not surprising that it did miserably.

Revenue Reforms of Muhammad bin Tughluq : Taxation in the Doab (1333-34)

The failure of the above-mentioned projects as also that of the military expeditions had disastrous effects on the finances of the state. The royal treasury was almost emptied and wealth 'which is the true source of political power', according to Barani, 'was expended.'[82] The sultan, in desperation, was compelled to think of new ways and means for increasing the revenues of the state; he launched his last major project pertaining to the enhancement of taxation in the Doab'.[83] This measure also ended in smoke and had catastrophic effects on the fortunes of the tughluq empire.

Muhammad bin Tughluq had started taking interest in the revenue administration of the state from the very beginning of his reign. Like his father he stood for the extension of agriculture and adopted a liberal attitude towards the cultivators. He introduced a register of the revenue and expenditure of the provinces in which the financial resources and liabilities of each *iqta* were shown separately. It was perhaps intended to introduce a uniform revenue policy throughout the sultanate on the basis of the information gathered from this register. We, however, do not know of any valuable reform made by him in the land revenue administration. The measurement of land and the rational assessment of the government demand were never contemplated. Nevertheless, the sultan is said to have made one brief experiment for the reclamation of the barren land and improvement of agricultural produce through rotation of crops. For this purpose, he created a department of agriculture, styled *diwan i kohi*, which was managed by agricultural experts and officials of the revenue establishment in collaboration with the cultivators. A tract of land, about sixty miles square in area, was entrusted to it for experimentation and an investment of seventy *lakhs* of *tankas* was made on it over a period of two years. The cultivators as well as the bureaucracy of his day failed, however, to appreciate the true value of such a scientific approach to the problem of agricultural growth; the corrupt officials misappropriated the funds and the agriculturists did not apply their brains to break the old tradition in the pattern of cultivations. The department was wound up after three years; this was too short a period for such an experiment to produce any tangible results, of course. No more is heard of the sultan's interest in the improvement of agriculture or reform of the revenue administration thereafter; the enhancement of taxation in the Doab had nothing to do with that type of creative urge in him. It is not appropriate either to give it the name of 'a project'. The sultan was anxious to replenish the empty treasury; the fertility of

the Doab attracted him and, according to Barani, he arbitrarily enhanced the taxes in that region. The taxes were said to be intolerable and they wrought untold miseries on the people. In the words of Barani,

> "the enforcement of those schemes was made so rigorous that the feeble and low among the *ra'iyat* were wiped out, while those who were rich and possessed the means and wherewithal became rebellious, with the result that the cities and districts were ruined and cultivation was reduced to nothing. On hearing of the ruin and destruction of the *ra'iyat* in the Doab and fearing lest a similar fate should befall them, the inhabitants of distant provinces also revolted and crept into jungles. On account of the diminution of cultivation in the Doab land (*miyan i Doab*), the ruin of the *ra'iyat* of the *miyan i Doab*, and the rare arrival of the *caravans* and convoys of grain from other parts of Hindustan in Delhi and in the whole of the Doab area, a destructive famine broke out; prices of grains soared high and the rains also stopped. A general famine prevailed, which continued for several years during which period perished millions of human beings; the old established life was disorganised and many people were displaced and uprooted. From that day departed the glory of Sultan Muhammad's empire and his administration declined and became inffective."[84]

Barani, whose native district Baran (mod. Bulandshahr, U.P.), also suffered from the effects of this enhanced taxation, bitterly criticises the sultan for his cruel treatment of the agriculturists of the Doab. His version of the Doab episode is, however, vague and rather misleading. In the first place, he does not inform the readers as to the actual rate of the additional assessment imposed by the sultan; his statement like 'the taxes were doubled', or 'increased ten or five times' are meaningless unless we know the existing rates of taxation which were affected by this enhancement. Second, his account of the sufferings of the peasants is exaggerated; and, in the third place, he confuses principal points in the story by over-emphasising the relationship between three distinct issues —the Doab episode, the spread of general famine in the country, and the widespread revolts in various parts of his empire. Regarding Muhammad bin Tughluq's taxation in the Doab, a few points are worthy of note. While recruiting the Khurasan army (1332-33), the sultan had made concessions to the peasants and the rajput warrior classes of the Doab; he had remitted even the land tax in certain districts. He reintroduced these taxes after the disbandment of the army. The people, who had once enjoyed a concession by way of a special privilege, resented even the re-imposition of the normal taxes. Non-payment of taxes had been allowed to them as a privilege but they converted it into their right. Moreover,

we have reason to believe that the taxes imposed by Muhammad bin Tughluq were not heavy. Alauddin Khalji had raised the state demand of land revenues to 50 per cent of the actual produce. It was subsequently reduced by Mubarak Shah Khalji and Ghiasuddin Tughluq; the latter attempted to pacify the agriculturists by charging only 10 per cent of the produce as the land revenue. Muhammad bin Tughluq probably raised this rate to double the amount. In other words, he brought the land revenue to the normal standard, i.e., about one-fifth of the actual produce.

Of course, in addition to the normal land revenue, Muhammad bin Tughluq levied some *abwabs* such as house tax and the grazing tax. These taxes had been in operation during the reign of Alauddin Khalji and were very unpopular. As these had been allowed to fall into disuse under Alauddin's successors, their revival by Muhammad bin Tughluq was resented very much. It led to widespread discontent among the people of the Doab. The refractory landlords made alliance with the disbanded soldiers of the Khurasan army and created trouble for the government. They refused to pay the taxes and made an altogether different use of the arms and the military training that they had acquired a short-while ago at the expense of the state. The tax collectors used force for the realisation of state dues. As luck would have it, the rains failed and northern India was caught in the grip of a severe famine about this time; it lasted two or three years. The bondage of goodwill and faith between the sultan and his bureaucracy seemed to have broken completely; that is why none among his ministers dared to apprise the sultan of the need to change his taxation policy in time. As a result, the revenue officials continued to oppress the starving peasants for the extraction of the state dues. Unable to simultaneously bear the government oppression and starvation, the poor cultivators were forced to abandon their lands; most of them flocked to the capital and other provincial towns with their starving families while some resorted to highway robbery. The tug-of-war between the unimaginative bureaucracy and peasantry in the Doab is explained by Haji ud Dabir in the following words:

> "When the tax collectors treated the peasants harshly, the latter killed them. On this the emperor sent the *amiran i saddah* against them. They killed the peasants Then the peasants seized the opportunity and killed the *amiran i saddah*. As a result, the region (of the Doab) was completely ruined".[85]

As usual; the sultan realised the gravity of the situation too late. He adopted liberal relief measures for the populace of Delhi and the other famine-affected areas; Ibn Battuta writes:

"When famine was raging all over Hind and Sind, and prices became exorbitant to such an extent that the price of a *maund* of wheat rose to six *dinars*, the sultan ordered six months' provisions at the rate of a daily allowance of one and a half *rati* of *maghrib* (equivalent to 750 grams of modern Indian weight) per head to be given to every one great or small, free or slave. The jurists and judges set out registering the names of the inhabitants in different streets, sending for the people and giving to each victuals amounting to six months' provisions".[86]

The collection of land revenue and other taxes was suspended, the peasants were advanced loans for the purchase of bullocks and seeds, and provision was made to dig wells for irrigation. Nevertheless, many of the uprooted peasant families could not be persuaded to go back to their villages and take up to cultivation once again. The Doab episode was silently merged into the countrywide discontent against the misrule of Muhammad bin Tughluq It led to the gradual decline and disintegration of the sultanate of Delhi.

Domestic Policy of Firoze Tughluq (1351-88)

Muhammad bin Tughluq had no male issue; on his death, he was succeeded on the throne of Delhi by his cousin Firoze Tughluq, who enjoyed a long reign of thirty-seven years (1351-88). He inherited a truncated empire. infested with widespread revolts and disorder. The civil services had been crippled and the royal treasury was empty. The people in general had been suffering and simmering with discontent under the oppressive rule of his predecessor. Firoze Tughluq's immediate task was to pacify the subjects and restore law and order. He handled the situation very tactfully and initiated a state policy on a conciliatory note. It is said that Muhammad bin Tughluq had advanced loans to the peasants to the tune of two *crores* of rupees 'for the purpose of restoring the land, villages and quarters which had fallen into ruin during the famine'; Firoze Tughluq wrote off all these debts of the agriculturists and others. He traced the victims of his predecessor's tyranny and relieved their distress. He obtained deeds of satisfaction from them which were buried in the tomb of the deceased sultan, apparently 'to ensure peace to the departed soul' and help it 'on the Day of Judgment'. This action of Firoze Tughluq, though based on a blind religious faith, proved very helpful to him in winning the confidence and support of the masses; in a way, the sultan recounted the oppressive deeds of his predecessor and made amends for them.

Firoze Tughluq revised the penal code by softening the punishments which were made more humane; brutal punishments based on physical torture and amputation of organs were abolished.

The judicial set up was overhauled and even-handed justice administered to all. The sultan increased the salaries of the civil servants and the army.

Fiscal Reforms: The next problem that confronted Firoze Tughluq was the near economic bankruptcy of the state; he was conscious of the fact that, in order to obtain stability of his rule, general economic health of the state should be improved, royal treasury replenished, and the financial credibility of the government restored. He, therefore, took keen interest in the revenue establishment though he was not an expert in financial affairs by any means. He thoroughly revised the fiscal policy of his predecessors with the twin objects of ensuring adequate state revenues and reducing the burden on the tax payers. He imparted a theocratic tinge to the taxation policy by abolishing as many as twenty-three cesses, including the unpopular grazing and the house taxes. According to the sanction of the Islamic law, only four taxes were retained; these were *kharaj*, *zakat*, *jaziya* and *khams*.[87] The rate of *kharaj* —'the land revenue' was considerably lowered and brought to one-tenth of the estimated produce to the great relief of the agriculturists. The earlier sultans of Delhi, particularly Alauddin Khalji, used to acquire from the soldiers four-fifths of the booty, obtained during the war, as *khams*, but Firoze Tughluq, following strictly the Islamic injunctions, reversed the ratio and wanted his soldiers to pay only one-fifth of such spoils to the state exchequer;[88] the soldiery must have benefited immensely from this measure. On the other hand, in order to show his religious zeal, the sultan extended the scope of the *jaziya* by levying it on the *brahmans* also who had previously been exempt from this tax. At a later stage, Firoze Tughluq introduced, with the approval of the theologians, an irrigation tax at ten per cent of the produce of the lands which were irrigated by the state-constructed canals. The sultan deputed Khwaja Hisamuddin Junaid to prepare a rough estimate of the public revenues of the state. He, accompanied by a large body of the staff, travelled through the kingdom for six years and, after examining the revenue records of the various provinces, assessed the revenue expected from the *khalsa* lands (under the direct administrative control of the centre) at six *crore* and eighty-five *lakh tankas*. Various rough and ready methods, based on local traditions and customs, were adopted for the assessment of land revenue; the scientific principles of the measurement of land and determination of the state demand on the actual produce of the soil, were totally discarded. Nevertheless, Firoze Tughluq attempted to prescribe the state demand on a more or less permanent basis. It helped him in ensuring a steady flow of revenues into the exchequer and regulating the expenditure of the state in accordance with the income.

Firoze Tughluq permitted the collection of *jaziya* through coercive means; otherwise his revenue officials were under strict

instructions not to make demands 'in excess of the regular government dues', and those found guilty of 'any such exaction', had to make 'full reparation'.[89] Firoze Tughluq's motto was—

> "Better a people's weal than treasures vast,
> Better an empty chest than hearts downcast."[90]

The interests of the agriculturists were well-protected during the regime of Firoze Tughluq. The sultan constructed four or five fine canals which irrigated a large tract of land in the vicinity of Delhi including Hissar (modern Haryana). New agricultural settlements sprang up along the banks of these canals. According to Afif, 150 wells were sunk at state expense to provide drinking water to the travellers and for irrigation. Firoze Tughluq is said to have laid out 1200 state-managed fruit gardens in the neighbourhood of the capital. Their produce was sold in the open market; it brought substantial income to the exchequer besides providing rich and nutritive food to the royal household and the populace of Delhi. Firoze Tughluq also helped in the extension and promotion of the internal trade and commerce by abolishing vexatious taxes and reducing the octroi duties. All these measures benefited the country immensely; agricultural production increased, trade and commerce was revived and the countryside rehabilitated where the '*ra'iyats*g rew rich and were satisfied'. It warded off the famines and ushered in an era of peace and prosperity. We have it on the testimony of Afif that

> "abundance of the necessaries of life prevailed in the reign of Firoze Shah not only in the capital but throughout his dominions. During the whole forty years of his reign, there was no appearance of scarcity, and the times were so happy that the people of Delhi forgot the reign of Alauddin, although no more prosperous times than this (*sic*) had ever fallen to the lot of any Muhammadan sovereign."[91]

Afif makes an interesting comparison between the 'plenty and cheapness' that prevailed during the reigns of Alauddin Khalji and Firoze Tughluq as follows:

> "In the reign of Alauddin the necessaries of life were abundant through excellent management, but through the favour of God, grain continued cheap throughout the reign of Firoze Shah, without any effort on his part. Grain was so cheap that, in the city of Delhi, wheat was eight *jitals* a *maund*, and grain and barley four *jitals* a *maund*. A campfollower could give his horse a feed of ten *seers* of corn (*dalida*) for one *jital*. Fabrics of all kinds were cheap, and silk goods, both white and coloured, were of moderate price."[92]

Firoze Tughluq's agrarian policy was in no way progressive or scientific. Instead of streamlining the state machinery in the matters of revenue assessment and collection, the sultan entrusted the work to the bidders, contractors and middlemen. The revenue officials were liberally provided but through rent-free land grants. Firoze Tughluq revived the *jagir* system with a vengeance; the whole kingdom was parcelled out into fiefs and the fiefs into districts which were held by the regional and local government officials almost as personal estates. In addition to the land grants, the nobility as well as the bureaucracy received fat allowances which enabled them to accumulate large fortunes. The nobles enjoyed considerable powers in the internal administrative affairs of their rent-free holdings which cut at the very roots of the uniformity of administration and integrity of the central authority. The system of granting lands or assignments (*itlak*) upon the revenues were extended even to the junior ranks which did an incalculable harm, in the long run, to the army establishment as well as the state. The soldiers on active duty were unable to collect the revenues by themselves, and they sold out their assignment deeds at a discount to the professional revenue collectors or middlemen. Afif writes that.

> "It was the practice of certain persons in those days to buy up these assignments, which was an accommodation to both parties. They used to give one-third of the value for them in the city and receive assignments carried on a traffic in them, and gaining a good profit, many of them got rich and made their fortunes."[93]

This evil practice robbed the soldiers of their officially declared emoluments, sapped the vitality of the state and ultimately ruined the cultivators as they were fleeced by the contractors and middlemen who grew more influential and powerful with the passage of time. In the absence of a strong incentive and support from the centre, the officials could do pretty little against them. The agrarian reforms of Firoze Tughluq, therefore, did more harm than good to the peasants as well as the state economy in the long run.

Public Welfare Works: Sultan Firoze Tughluq was a great philanthropist; he exerted himself for the well-being of his subjects. While referring to his public welfare activities, he spoke in the tone of a religious bigot who apparently intended to do everything for his co-religionists *albeit* many of his philanthropic deeds benefited all the people—muslims as well as hindus alike. He regarded the uplift of the poor and the downtrodden as his religious and moral duty. In the *Futuhat i Firoze Shahi*, which was, in fact, a written sermon, delivered at the Friday mass of the *jama masjid* of Firozabad, the sultan expressed the desire that

> "to the best of my human power, I should recount and pay my thanks for the many blessings God has bestowed upon me so that I may be found among the number of His servants."[94]

Firoze Tughluq set up a separate department, called the *diwan i khairat*, for the help of the poor and the needy (*fukra wa maskin*). One of its functions was to make arrangements for the marriages of the poor muslim girls at state expense. God-fearing and extremely humble in his disposition, the sultan paid regard to the holymen, repaired the tombs of the *sufi* saints, created endowment funds through grant of lands for the maintenance of *khanqahs* and looked after the comforts of the *fakirs* and all those devoted to religious pursuits. He introduced the practice of granting old-age pensions, and opened an employment bureau to find work for the unemployed. Of course, a step of misplaced generosity taken by Firoze Tughluq was that he began to offer civil and military services to the persons for life, and some of the higher offices were made almost hereditary.[95] He ran charitable kitchens (*langars*) to provide free food to the poor, constructed *serais* along the roads and opened rest houses for the pilgrims 'resorting to the tombs of illustrious kings and celebrated saints'. The sultan himself writes that

> "for providing the things necessary in these holy places, I confirmed and gave effect to the grants of villages, lands, and other endowments which had been conferred upon them in olden times. In those cases where no endowment, or provision had been settled, I made an endowment, so that these establishments might for ever be secure of an income, to afford comfort to travellers and wayfarers, to holy men and learned men."[96]

Firoze Tughluq opened a magnificent charitable hospital (*dar ush shifa*) in the capital for the benefit of 'all sick persons, residents and travellers, gentle and simple, bond and free'.[97] Qualified physicians were appointed to attend to the outdoor as well as indoor patients who were supplied free medicines and food. The provincial officers were expected to emulate the example of the sultan in opening such charitable institutions and hospitals within the areas of their jurisdiction.

As a benevolent ruler, the sultan constructed canals, repaired the old tanks and dug wells to irrigate the fields and provide water for drinking and washing purposes. The grand *Hauz i Ilahi* or tank of Alauddin Khalji in Delhi had been put into disuse and was filled up with earth. The people 'carried on cultivation in it and had dug wells, of which they sold water'.[98] The sultan cleaned it out so that this great tank might again be filled from year to year. Similarly, the *Hauz i Shamsi* or tank of Altumish had been 'deprived of water by some graceless men who stopped up the channels of supply'. Firoze Tughluq punished those 'incorrigible men severely and opened again the closed up channels' for the public benefit.

Firoze Tughluq took keen interest in the promotion of education and learning. He was a great patron of scholars and writers; the *maulvis* and *ulama* received liberal subsistence allowances from the state. He opened many schools (*maktabs*) and colleges (*madrasas*) in important towns; these and the numerous elementary schools attached to the mosques throughout the sultanate were liberally provided by the state. Firoze Tughluq was a builder *par excellence*. He founded new cities, added new townships to the existing urban habitats, built forts, palaces, mosques, tombs, water reservoirs, *caravan serais*, bridges, canals, public baths, hospitals and charity houses. He founded the cities of Fatehabad, Hissar Firoza (modern Hissar), Jaunpur and Firozabad, now known as Kotla Firoze Shah, a part of the metropolis. The sultan showed keen interest in the preservation of old monuments and carried out extensive repairs to most of the tombs and public buildings of his predecessors. Though ignorant of the real significance of the Ashokan pillars, Firoze Tughluq got two of them brought to Delhi—one from Topra (district Ambala) and the other from Meerut, and transplanted them at the new township of Firozabad.

Firoze Tughluq is said to have established 36 state-owned factories (*karkhanas*) for the manufacture of various accessories of life and luxurious goods for use by the royalty and the public. These were managed by a special branch of the *diwan i wizarat*, called the *diwan khana*. The labour force was provided by the slaves who were imparted technical training so that they might become useful members of the society. Consciously or unconsciously, Firoze Tughluq gave an inducement to the expansion of the system of slavery or bonded labour. He is said to have 1,80,000 slaves who were attached to the royal establishment alone; 40,000 of them mounted guard at the royal palace for the defence of the royal family. The sultan encouraged the practice of enslaving the prisoners of war and sometimes organised raids into the territories of the 'infidel' principalities simply with the object of securing slaves who were forcibly converted to Islam. The provincial governors and nobility were under instructions to supply more and more of the slaves as a part of their royal liabilities or annual tribute. The sultan demanded unqualified loyalty and service from the slaves. Though paid liberally by the sultan, most of them did not reconcile themselves to the loss of personal liberties nor did they develop the feeling of loyalty to the ruling family or the state. They served the sultan during his lifetime but wreaked their vengeance upon the members of the royal family after his death. They unhesitatingly chopped off the heads of the princes and hung them at the gates of the royal court.

Firoze Tughluq was an orthodox *sunni mussalman*; he resorted to religious bigotry as a matter of state policy, *albeit* by virtue of his gentle and humane nature, he could not afford to be cruel and inhuman towards the non-muslims in actual practice. He suffered

from an inferiority complex that he had been born of a hindu mother, therefore, in order to establish his credibility as the sovereign of 'an Islamic state' and leader of 'the faithful', he publicly demonstrated contempt for hinduism and displayed extraordinary zeal for Islam. He was equally intolerant of the *shias* and other muslim dissenters. He always attempted to win the goodwill and support of the *ulama* and extended the influence of the theologians in the state affairs. He was the last great sultan of Delhi; with his death in 1388 departed the glory of the sultanate. It rapidly disintegrated under his weak and incompetent successors.

Invasion of Amir Timur (1398-99): Its baneful Effects on the Life and Condition of the People

Northern India fell a victim to the fury of Amir Timur and his marauding hordes in 1398-99. Nicknamed *Timur i Lang* — 'Timur the Lame', he was one of the greatest monarchs of central Asia, the second most barbaric, blood-thirsty and awe-inspiring warrior after Chengez Khan, who set on the throne of Samarqand. He waged ruthless wars against the adjoining countries and established his sway over the whole of central Asia, including Persia and Afghanistan. It is said that during the ceaseless warfare carried on by him for over thirty-five years of (1370-1405) he never suffered defeat in any battle. Amir Timur thought of invading India in 1397 with the two-fold object of waging a holy war against 'the infidels' and laying his hands upon the fabulous wealth of the country.[99] His mouth must have watered to hear of the treasure trove of 'the golden sparrow of the east' about whose immense wealth he attempts to form a mental picture in his memoirs by chewing the figures of its state revenues:

> "My *wazirs* informed me that the whole amount of the revenue of India is six *arbs*, now each *arb* is a 100 *crores*, and each *crore* is a 100 *lacs*, and each *lac* is a 100,000 *miskals* of silver."[100]

The political anarchy that prevailed in India facilitated that task of Amir Timur. His grandson Pir Muhammad led the advance guard from Kabul into India towards the end of 1397; he crossed the unguarded Khyber pass without any opposition and marched along the Indus. On receipt of a favourable report from him regarding the progress of the expedition, Timur left Samarqand at the head of 92,000 cavalry in March 1398; at that time he was sixty-two. He crossed the Indus in September, defeated the khokhars and then marched towards Multan which was conquered by prince Muhammad before the arrival of the army of invasion. Amir Timur carried fire and sword into the southwestern Punjab and ravaged all the important towns including Talumba, Pakpattan, Dipalpur, Bhatnair, Fatehabad, Sirsa, Sunam, Kaithal and Panipat. He reached in the vicinity of Delhi in December and occupied *Jahannuma*, the palace constructed by Firoze Tughluq on the

bank of the Jumna at a distance of about six miles from old Delhi; a *lakh* of the hindus, taken prisoners from north western India by the invaders, were mercilessly put to the sword and thrown into the river on the orders of Aimr Timur lest they might create trouble for them during their conflict with the army of Delhi.[101] Sultan Mahmud Tughluq, a weak successor of Firoze Tughluq's ruling house and his minister Mallu Iqbal fought an action with the invaders on December 17, 1398 but suffered defeat and fled; Mallu retreated to Bulandshahr while Mahmud Tughluq escaped to Gujarat. Timur made a triumphant entry into Delhi the next day; the leading citizens and *ulama* of the capital waited upon the victor and sought mercy for the inhabitants. Amir Timur agreed to spare their lives and was accorded royal reception by the populace of Delhi. He stayed in the capital for fifteen days only. The fabulous wealth of the ex-rulers of Delhi and the nobility, including invaluable treasures, horses and elephants fell into his hands; besides he received immense wealth and supplies from the citizens as 'the contributions laid upon the city', *albeit* his turbulent soldiers were bent upon loot and plunder. One day 'a party of fierce turk soldiers laid violent hands upon the goods of the inhabitants',[102] the latter resisted and in the scuffle that followed, some soldiers of Timur were killed. In a fit of rage, Timur ordered a general massacre of the populace of Delhi. The bloody carnage continued for five days. Amir Timur himself describes the sack of Delhi in the following words:

> "The flames of strife were thus lighted and spread through the whole city from Jahanpanah and Siri to old Delhi. The savage turks fell to killing and plundering. The hindus set fire to their houses with their own hands, burned their wives and children in them, and rushed into the fight and were killed. The hindus and *gabres* of the city showed much alacrity and boldness in fighting. On that day, Thursday, and all the night of Friday, nearly 15,000 turks were engaged in slaying, plundering and destroying. When morning broke out on Friday, all my army, no longer under control, went off to the city and thought of nothing but killing, plundering and making prisoners....the spoil was so great that each man secured from fifty to a hundred prisoners, men, women and children. There was no man who took less than twenty. The other booty was immense in rubies, diamonds garnets, pearls and other gems, jewels of gold and silver, *ashrafies*, *tankas* of gold and silver, and brocades and silks of great value. Gold and silver ornaments of the hindu women were obtained in such quantities as to exceed all account.
>
> "Excepting the quarter of the *sayyads*, the *ulama* and the other mussalmans, the whole city was sacked. The pen of fate had written down this destiny for the people of this city. Although

I was desirous of sparing them, I could not succeed, for it was the will of God that this calamity should fall upon the city."[103]

When a *lakh* of the hungry wolves (*gurgans*) were let loose upon the defenceless citizens of the metropolis, it is difficult to perceive how they could discriminate between hindus and muslims among the commonfolk, may be some *sayyads* and *maulvis*, because of their distinct physical make-up and garments, were spared their lives. Of course, the prisoners included a large number of the masons and craftsmen, both hindus and muslims who were taken to central Asia to slave for the victors.

On his return march, Timur sacked the towns of Meerut and Hardwar, and then followed a more northerly route along the foothills. Kangra and Jammu were ravaged *en route* to Lahore where he stayed for a while and made arrangements for the despatch of his troops in a systematic order. Heavily laden with booty, the victorious army of Timur crossed back the Indus in March 1399 *en route* to Samarqand. His invasion had disastrous effects on the political, socio-cultural and economic condition of northern India. Timur descended upon the country as 'a scourge of God' and wrought untold miseries upon its people. The whole of northwestern region, including Punjab, Delhi and a part of the Doab, was trampled under feet by the turkish hordes and robbed of its incalculable wealth. Dozens of big towns were sacked and devastated, hundreds of flourishing villages razed to the ground and totally wiped out, and millions of innocent men, women and children put to the sword. The male prisoners were used as beasts of burden to carry the spoils on their heads for their victors to their homelands; many of them died of hunger and fatigue on the way. Thousands of Indian women were enslaved, dishonoured and humiliated.

The cultural and industrial development of northwestern India came to a standstill as a result of the extensive destruction of magnificent monuments, libraries and *karkhanas*. The whole region, ransacked by the invaders, was deprived of most of the talented craftsmen, artisans, mechanics and artists who were taken as slaves to central Asia. Of course, they constructed public buildings, palaces, forts and mausoleums for their masters and contributed towards the industrial and cultural development of central Asia.

The entire administrative set up of northern India was thrown out of gear by Timur's onslaught. The people who escaped death or enslavement at the hands of his soldiers were left without adequate protection under the defunct governmental authority of the land. Political anarchy encouraged the thieves, highwaymen and other anti-social elements to create havoc among the helpless people. The socio-economic life of the countryside having been dislocated, the agricultural production stopped resulting in the scarcity of foodstuffs

and the rise of prices. Timur left behind famine, disease and misery for the inhabitants of northwestern India. Never before had so much harm been done by any invader to India in a single onslaught; the vandalism displayed by-Mahmud of Ghazni during his Indian campaigns pales into insignificance before the atrocities committed by the marauders of Amir Timur on the unarmed and defenceless citizens.

Amir Timur gave a fatal blow to the Tughluq dynasty and the sultanate of Delhi. It was an irony of fate that the grand edifice of the sultanate which had been raised by the strenuous efforts of the turkish leader Muhammad Ghori and his brilliant turkish slave generals should be razed to the ground mercilessly, two centuries later, by Amir Timur, the greatest turkish warrior of the day. Delhi, once the metropolis of an extensive Islamic empire on the subcontinent, and the hub of Islamic culture and civilisation to the east of Baghdad, lay in ruins, with its debris soaked in the blood of its unfortunate citizens. It was not a mere sack of the city by Timur; he insulted, humiliated and disgraced a magnificent creation of the civilised world, in a most barbaric and inhuman manner. He robbed the city not only of its wealth but also honour, dignity and self-respect. Delhi stood downgraded in the estimation of the people and lost its glory and prestige as the imperial capital of India for a long time to come. Anarchy prevailed everywhere in northern India. The fear of any central authority taking its roots in Delhi in the near future having disappeared, the warlords of average capabilities and narrow regional outlooks, raised their heads and started a scramble for territorial possessions, thus making the confusion worse confounded.

The invasion of Amir Timur guaranteed the consolidation and prosperity of the two strong kingdoms—Bahmani and Vijayanagar in the south which had come into existence in the days of Muhammad bin Tughluq, *albeit* no such political power emerged in northern and central India which could fill up the vacuum, caused by the decline of the sultanate, on an extensive scale. The process of disintegration of the sultanate into regional states and petty principalities, which had begun long before, received a fillip by the invasion of Amir Timur.

One of the declared objectives of Amir Timur had been to destroy 'the infidels' of India *albeit* his army, like a steam-roller, knocked down all the Indians alike, whether hindus or muslims. As a matter of fact, Amir Timur insulted India and its people as a whole, and, like Mahmud of Ghazni, did more harm to the cause of Islam than to 'the infidels' in the subcontinent, it was the turkish sultanate of Delhi which was left prostrate and bleeding, beyond all hopes of recovery. The role of the sultans of Delhi in the socio-economic or cultural development of their subjects comes to an end with the invasion of Amir Timur.

Notes:

1. K.C. Panchanadikar & Mrs. J. Panchanadikar, *Determinants of Social Structure and Social Change in India and other Papers* : Popular Prakashan, Bombay, p. 45.
2. *ibid*, p. 46.
3. *ibid.*
4. *BVB*, VI, p. 574.
5. K.M. Ashraf, Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan, *op. cit:* p. 93.
6. *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*: *E & D*, III : p. 134.
7. *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*: p. 136.
8. *ibid.*, p. 188.
9. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*, p. 178; Firishta (Briggs), I, p. 195.
10. Barani, *Tarikh*, *op. cit.*
11. Firishta (Briggs), I, p. 195.
12. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*, p. 179,
13. K. S. Lal, *History of the Khaljis* (1290-1320): Allahabad, 1950, p. 243.
14. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*, pp. 179-80.
15. *Comp. HI*, V, p. 356.
16. *ibid*, p. 354.
17. *ibid.*
18. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*, p. 182.
19. *ibid.*
20. *ibid.*, pp. 182-83.
21. *ibid.*
22. *ibid*, p. 183.
23. *ibid.*
24. *ibid.*, *E & D* III, p. 191.
25. *ibid.*
26. A *tanka* was equivalent to the silver rupee of the Mughal period: it was one *tola* in weight.
27. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*, p, 192.
28. *ibid*, pp. 192-97.
29. Mohammad Habib & Dr (Mrs) Afsar Khan, *The Political Theory of the Delhi Sultanate* (being the Eng. trs. of *Fatawa i Jahandari* of Barani), Kitab Mahal, Allahabad, p. 35.
30. The *tankas* were of gold as well as silver. There were 50 *jitals* to a silver *tanka*; the *jital* was a copper coin, the weight of which is not known: some presume that it was also a *tola* in weight while the others hold that it weighed 1.75 *tolas*. If *tanka* is taken to be the medieval equivalent of a modern rupee, a *jital* was worth two *paise*. The maund of the days of Alauddin Khalji, as mentioned by Barani, comprised 40 *seers* and each *seer* weighed 24 *tolas*.
31. Regulation 2, Barani's description of the regulations is defective because he did not have the original documents at his disposal when he wrote the narrative. He has discussed all the economic measures with special reference to Delhi alone though we have reason to believe that these economic regulations were made applicable to other parts of the sultanate as well.
32. Regulation 6.

33. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*, pp. 193-94.
34. *ibid*, p. 194.
35. *ibid.*
36. Regulation 7.
37. Barani, *Tarikh.* pp. 192-93.
38. *ibid*, p. 195.
39. Firishta (Briggs), I, p. 202.
40. Barani, *Tarikh*, p. 195.
41. *ibid.*
42. The price list of groceries for the capital included: sugar candy, one *seer* : 2 *jitals*; coarse sugar (*shakar*), one *seer*: 1 *jital*; coarse sugar *surkh* (*gur*), one *seer* : 0.5 *jital*; lamp oil, 3 *seers* : 1 *jital*; *ghee*, one *seer* : 0.5 *jital*; salt, 5 *seers* : 1 *jital*; onions & garlic, one *seer* : 1 *jital.* Firishta (Briggs), I, p. 204.
43. The rates quoted by Barani are: *chadar* (ordinary bed sheets): 10 *jitals* : long cloth, coarse, per 40 yards : 1 *tanka* (silver); long cloth, fine, per 20 yards : 1 *tanka* (silver)
44. Firishta gives a list of 15 different varieties of the fine cloth and silks: many of these names have been lost and hence uncomparable with the modern stuff; they included among others. *cheer*, Delhi, per piece: 16 *tankas*; cheer, Kotla, per piece : 6 *tankas*; *sillahuti*, fine, per piece : 4 *tankas*; sillahuti, middling, per piece : 3 *tankas*; *kirpas*, fine, per 20 yards : 1 *tanka.* (Briggs), I, p. 203.
45. Firishta (Briggs), I, p. 203.
46. *ibid.*, p. 204.
47. Barani's reference to the economic regulations in *Fatawa i Jahandari* supplements the account given by him in the *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi.* He writes: "The king should also know that every arrangement (*naqsh*) in the matter of buying and selling and price fixation, which he makes for his capital, will also appear in all his provinces. The officers and the *ra'iyat* of his country will accept it and follow it."—*Fatawa i Jahandari* (Habib & Afsar), p. 36.
48. Barani, *Fatawa i Jahandari* (Habib & Afsar), p. 197.
49. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*, p. 175.
50. Firishta (Briggs), I, p. 150.
51. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*, p. 201.
52. Firishta (Briggs), I, p. 212.
53. *ibid.*
54. Firishta mentions that Kafur brought 300 elephants to Delhi from the campaign (Briggs, I, p. 213); may be the Rai had surrendered only 100 elephants at Warrangal as a part of the treaty while the other 200 elephants fell into the hands of the invaders during the course of the campaign.
55. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*, p. 204. Silver does not find mention as having been taken as a part of the spoils during this expedition. When so much of gold, pearls and jewels were on hand, the carriage of silver as booty was not worthwhile; it ceased to be a valuable for the plunderers.—The Author.
56. S.R. Sharma, *The Crescent In India—A Study in Medieval History*, Bombay. 1937, p. 117.
57. For details refer to volume I of this study, pp. 187-88.
58. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*, p. 230.
59. *ibid.*

60. Quoted by Barani, *ibid.* Amir Khusrau received a pension of 1,000 *tankas* per mensem from Sultan Ghiasuddin Tughluq; both of them died in 1325 A.D.
61. Firishta (Briggs), I, p. 236.
62. Barani marks it as the second project, preceded by 'taxation in the Doab', which is chronologically wrong.
63. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*, p. 239.
64. Firishta (Briggs). I, p. 241.
65. This nasty situation developed after the failure of the sultan's major projects; it could have been the effect rather than the cause of the transfer of the capital.
66. Mahdi Husain, *Tughluq Dynasty* (containing a revised and enlarged edition of the *Rise and Fall of Muhammad bin Tughluq*), Calcutta, 1963, p. 144.
67. Firishta (Briggs), I, p, 241.
68. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*, p. 239.
69. *ibid.*
70. To quote Barani, "Many, from the toil of the long journey, perished on the road, and those who arrived at Deogir, could not endure the pain of exile. In despondency, they pined to death. All along Deogir, which is an *infidel* land, there sprang up graveyards of mussalmans."—*ibid.*
71. Referred to by Mahdi Husain, *Tughluq Dynasty*, *op. cit.*, p. 145.
72. *Comp. HI*, V. p. 514.
73. Barani treats it as project number three.
74. Edward Thomas, *The Chronicle of the Pathan Kings of Delhi*; Indian reprint, Delhi, 1967.
75. The traditional fractional currency, called the *jitals*, were made of copper; Barani says that the new *tankas*, to be used as equivalent to the silver *tankas* were also made of copper whereas Firishta uses the word *biranj*—brass or bronze, alloys of copper with tin, zinc or other base metals.
76. Chronicles of the Pathan Kings, *op. cit.*, p. 245.
77. By the word *hindu* Barani obviously means the goldsmiths. Since the goldsmiths were mostly hindus, he uses this term for them—'a favourite practice with Barani to use a generic term where a specific term is required'. K.A. Nizami observes that Barani's use of the word *turk* for ilbaris in the context of the rise of the khaljis, and his use of the word *hindu* here and in connection with the regulations of Alauddin Khalji concerning *khuts*, *muqaddams* and *chaudhries* are examples of this presentation, which has caused considerable confusion.'—*Com. HI*, V. pp. 517-18 fn.
78. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*, p. 240.
79. *ibid.*
80. *ibid.*
81. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*, p. 241.
82. *ibid.*
83. Barani is the only contemporary authority to make mention of this episode as a project, and that also out of context from the point of view of chronology. He gives serial number one to this project whereas Mahdi Husain, after careful analysis of the entire material available on the subject, has come to the conclusion that it was not the first but the last of the sultan's projects.—Refer to Barani, *Tarikh*, p. 238; & Mahdi Husain, *Tughluq Dynasty*, pp. 191-92.
84. Revised trs. by Mahdi Husain, quote in *Tughluq Dynasty*, pp. 225-26.
85. Quoted in Mahdi Husain, *Tughluq Dynasty*, p. 232.

86. *The Rehla of Ibn Battuta* (Mahdi Husain), pp. 84-85.
87. Sultan Firoze Shah Tughluq, *Futuhat i Firoze Shahi*, *E & D*, III, p. 377.
88. *ibid*, part 4, p. 377.
89. Afif, *Tarikn i Firoze Shahi*, pp. 289-90.
90. Firoze Tughluq, *Futuhat i Firoze Shahi*, *E & D*. III, p. 377,
91. Afif, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*, p. 344.
92. *ibid.*, p. 345.
93. Afif, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*, pp, 345-46.
94. *Futuhat i Firoze Shahi*, *E & D*, III, p. 375.
95. *ibid.*, p. 387.
96. *Futuhat i Firoze Shahi*, *E & D*, III, p. 385.
97. *ibid.*
98. *Ibid*, p. 383.
99. Prince Muhammad told Amir Timur that 'the whole country of India is full of gold and jewels, and in it there are seventeen mines of gold and silver, diamond and ruby and emerald and tin and iron and steel and copper and quicksilver, etc.; and of the plants which grow there are those fit for making wearing apparel, and aromatic plants, and the sugarcane, and it is a country which is always green and verdant, and the whole aspect of the country is pleasant and delightful. Now, since the inhabitants are chiefly polytheists and infidels and idolators and worshippers of the sun, by the order of God and his Prophet, it is right for us to conquer them'.—*Tuzuk i Timuri*, *E & D*, III, pp. 396-97.
100. *ibid.*, p. 397.
101. 'Maulana Nasiruddin Umar, a counsellor and man of learning who, in all his life, had not killed a sparrow, now, in execution of my order, slew with sword, fifteen idolatrous hindus, who were his captives.'—*Tuzuk i Timuri*, p. 436.
102. *Tuzuk i Timuri E & D*, III, p. 445.
103. *ibid.*, p. 446.

Chapter 5

Educational Development

(1206-1526)

1: Transplantation of an Exotic System of Education

The turko-afghan conquerors of northern India brought with them not only a new religion but also their own system of education to regulate the intellectual and cultural life of the people; and they enforced it on their subjects. The hindus had a mature and highly advanced system of education which constituted the backbone of the ancient Indian culture and civilisation *albeit* the foreign victors had least regard for it. Rather, they considered it to be an instrument for the perpetuation of 'infidelity' and 'idolatory' in the land, and looked at it with contemptuous indifference if not active hostility. During the army operations, the aggressors struck at the indigenous educational institutions and attempted to wipe them out of existence as far as possible. The brahmanic and jain temples, *tirthas*—'the places of pilgrimage', and the buddhist monasteries, which were the primary centres of ancient Indian education, were desecrated, and *masjids* erected on their ruins to proclaim the victory of Islam. The higher seats of indigenous learning at Thatta, Multan, Mathura, Varanasi, Nalanda and Vikramasila fell victims to the armies of aggression; at many places, the buildings of the educational institutions were razed to the ground and libraries set on fire. Loss of national independence by their patrons and transplantation of an entirely new system of education based on the study of Persian and Arabic languages and Islamic theology led to the extinction of the hindu seats of higher learning within the boundaries of the sultanate in the thirteenth century.

Two Parallel Systems of Education

There are reasons to believe that many of the distinguished teachers, writers and scholars of the war-affected areas fled to the

neighbouring hindu states, particularly towards the south, as refugees, and were accorded protection by their local rulers. As a major part of the country remained free from the turkish domination in the thirteenth century, the ancient or the hindu system of education remained intact beyond the boundaries of the sultanate and continued to flourish as ever before. By the time Islam penetrated into the south as a political force under the khaljis, much of the fury of the muslim conquerors against the hindu institutions of learning was over, and the two systems of education, one indigenous and the other foreign in contents as well as objectives, became operative side by side though they were quite exclusive of each other. There seems to have been very little meeting ground between the two until the rise of Akbar to power by the middle of the sixteenth century. The two apparently rival systems of education bore strong affinity with each other, however. Both of them were firmly rooted in theology and were managed by their respective priestly classes who acted as the religious and spiritual guardians as well as the intellectual leaders of their communities. They thus played the roles of teachers and preachers simultaneously. They wielded great influence in their respective state policies, whether at the court of the sultans or in those of the hindu rulers, and were usually held in high esteem by the people at large. Like hindus, the muslims also attached great importance to education as a vehicle of change and progress; they revered their learned men and regarded it as their religious duty to provide for their maintenance.

2: Salient Features of Hindu and Muslim Systems of Education

Hindu System of Education

The traditional hindu system of India remained in vogue during the medieval period without much change. Education was not regarded as a state responsibility in ancient times *albeit* it was nourished and most jealously maintained by the hindu society through its own resources. As a matter of fact, the hindu rulers, whether of the ancient period or those of the medieval age, 'had nothing directly to do with education'. It was a private affair of the people, managed entirely by the brahman, buddhist and jain priests. The rulers might 'subsidise it, if they thought it fit to do so, with grants of land or money, but could impose no conditions or control on teachers, affecting freedom of work'.[1] The primary schools, called *pathshalas*, were usually attached to or housed in the premises of the brahmanic or jain temples. Either the priests themselves acted as teachers or appointed *pandits* or jain scholars to impart education to the minor children of the locality free of charge. These institutions received state grants or were maintained entirely by the public endowments and charity. So also was the case with the buddhist monasteries where the monks imparted

education in the three Rs.—viz; reading, writing and arithmetic, besides the knowledge of holy scriptures to their young wards. Apart from the temples and shrines, big villages and towns, which contained a substantial population of the caste hindus, maintained their own *pathshalas*. These were set up by the local inhabitants through corporate activity and run on public charity. In spite of their defeat and discomfiture on the military and political fronts, the hindu populace of the sultanate did not allow their institutions of elementary education or primary schools to die out of existence. Though deprived of the state patronage, the *pathshalas* were stubbornly maintained by the *brahman* scholars and priests with whatever meagre resources at their command. Sometimes a teacher would conduct his classes within his not so spacious family quarters, and 'the home of the teacher functioned as the school in those days'.[2] Education in the brahmanic *pathshalas* was free and accessible to all except to *sudras* while the buddhists 'who had no castes, imparted education to all without any restriction or discrimination'. As the education was primarily religious in nature and content, the teachers committed their holy scriptures and even the secular literature of the past to rote memory. They thus preserved the knowledge and wisdom of bygone days and took it as their religious and moral duty to pass on this knowledge to the younger generations without any personal obligations.

The ancient institutes of higher learning were known by different names in various parts of the country such as *gurukulas*, *gurugrahas*, *maths*, *tols*, *sangam*, *chatuspathis* or *chaupasis*. They maintained high standards of academic studies and spiritual or philosophical attainments, and could be compared to modern colleges and residential universities *albeit* they did not owe their birth to the statutes of any government nor depended upon the financial aid from official quarters for their survival. Instead, they came into being through a process of evolution or natural growth of education and learning by the society and were deeply rooted in the religious thoughts and beliefs of the people. They were run by the teachers themselves without intervention of the state bureaucracy and maintained by the public as their social, religious and cultural obligations to the progeny. These institutions were 'like the *studia generalia* of medieval Europe'—the settlements of the teachers and the taught.

The ancient Indian system of education, though based on religion, was 'secular in character'[3] Broadly speaking, the 'preservation of ancient heritage and culture' and its 'enrichment' was the primary aim of education. With the establishment of the muslim rule in India, the progress of hindu education came to a standstill but the problem of safeguarding 'the heritage of the past became so great that all the ability of scholars was engrossed in preserving it'.[4] The specified objectives of ancient Indian education included among others 'the formation of character, building up of all-round

personality, and 'the training of rising generation in the performance of social and religious duties'.[5] According to a European scholar, the hindu system of education stood for moral and spiritual progress of which 'purity in thought and life' formed 'the keystone'. It 'helped the development of personalityby cultivating self-respect, self reliance and self-restraint. The educational system laid particular stress upon civic and social duties and responsibilities'.[6]

A child was usually sent to the *pathshala* at the age of five when a formal initiation ceremony 'upanayana' was performed at an auspicious time, determined in consultation with an astrologer; at the occasion, the parents gave gifts to the brahmans and distributed alms among the poor. As all the centres of higher learning were residential institutions, the students sought admission there and resided with the families of their teachers throughout the period of their education and training. The period of study and the duration of courses were not fixed *albeit* the student-life normally lasted till an individual attained the age of twenty-five according to the *Manusmriti*. The students observed *brahmacharya* and led a life of rigorous discipline and simplicity. The teachers treated the students like their own sons while the latter performed all sorts of domestic services for them, including scavenging, washing of clothes, and looking after their cattle. A student was always at the beck and call of his teacher and very often had to go to the adjoining villages for the collection of alms for himself and his teacher's family. The teacher also fulfilled his obligations towards his pupils as their spiritual father; he provided food and clothing for them out of the provisions received at the institute through public charity or collective efforts of the pupils themselves, and looked after their physical and moral health. If a student fell ill 'the teacher would nurse and serve him as a father would do for his son'.[7] The hindu system of education exalted 'the teacher to such a position of reverence that he was worshipped by his pupils'.[8]

Sanskrit was the medium of instruction from the elementary school level. The method of teaching was oral because of the fact that printing was unknown in those days and the handwritten manuscripts were rare. The knowledge of the three Rs was quickly supplemented by the introduction of some religious texts, including the simplified versions of the *Puranas*, the stories of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, and elementary lessons in *dharamasastras*. The curriculum of the institutions of higher education was fairly extensive and diversified. Besides the specialised study of Sanskrit language and literature, and the religious scriptures of the brahmanic, buddhist and jain cults, it comprised a large number of secular subjects such as mathematics, astronomy, astrology, yoga, logic, philosophy, biology, geography, medicine and military science. Caste and professional requirements were taken into

consideration in granting admission to the students for various courses of study. Usually a period of ten to twelve years was needed for graduation in a subject. The system of holding classwise annual examinations was not in vogue *albeit* each student was put to various types of tests by the teacher from time to time and promoted to the next higher standard; the teacher himself was, of course, the sole judge of his pupil's standard of attainment at a given stage. The completion of studies and termination of the period of *brahmacharya* was marked by a formal ceremony called *samvartana* which 'included a number of acts signifying the end of the austerities imposed upon the condition of studentship'. It is said that on that auspicious day, 'the *brahmachari* was confined in a room in the morning lest his superior lustre puts to shame the sun which shines in the lustre borrowed of him'. He came out of the room at midday, 'shaved his head and cut off all marks of his studentship. Then followed the bath accompanied by the use of powder, perfumes, ground sandalwood and the like to be presented by the friends and relations of the student'[9]. Thereupon he became a *snataka* and offered *gurudakshina* to his teacher and sought his permission to enter *grihasth-ashram* or householder's life after marriage. The *gurudakshina* might comprise anything of whatever value such as a cow, a horse, garments, grain, or even a handful of fruits and flowers which the student could conveniently 'procure' from his friends and relations or collect as gifts for his teacher by begging. In the opinion of R.K. Mookerji, the payment of *gurudakshina* was 'enjoined more as a religious act formally bringing to a close the period of studentship and marking the fulfilment of a sacred vow than as any kind of material remuneration' for the education imparted to him by the teacher.[10] No formal degrees or diplomas were awarded *albeit* some of the outstanding students did receive the *honorific* titles of *sarvabhauma*, *upadhyaya*, *mahaupadhyaya*, *vedi*, *dwivedi*, *trivedi*, *chaturvedi*, etc., either from their teacher or the congregation of scholars on the basis of their academic merit.

Hindu Institutions of Higher Education in Early Medieval India

As mentioned earlier, a number of hindu institutions of higher education and learning were overrun by the arab and turko-afghan invaders in the wake of the conquest of northern India; the institutions thus destroyed and put out of action included those situated at Debal, Thatta, Multan, Vaihand, Lahore, Kurukshetra, Mathura, Vrindavan, Ajmer, Prayag, Varanasi, Kanauj, Ayodhya, Nalanda and Vikramasila. Most of their scholars migrated to other parts of the country. Some of these educational institutions were revived by the brahman and buddhist scholars after the establishment of the sultanate and restoration of law and order in the Indo-Gangetic valley *albeit*, having been deprived of the state patronage, social status and religious freedom, the hindu system of higher education

did not attract many students or teachers. At places like Thatta, Multan, Sirhind, Mathura, Vrindavan, Prayag, Ayodhya and Varanasi, hindu institutes of higher learning were re-established by some individuals but none of them could regain the past glory and prestige of the pre-muslim days. On the other hand, those parts of the country which remained beyond the pale of the muslim rule were studded with numerous institutions of higher learning of national and international fame as ever before. Some of those shot into prominence because of the influx of scholars from the muslim-occupied areas and the liberal patronage extended to them by the rajput chieftains. Quite a few of the hindu rulers of the early medieval period were themselves distinguished scholars and writers who made substantial contributions towards the advancement of education and learning.

University of Mithila: Mithila occupied a premier position among the hindu universities of northern India in the medieval period. Situated in north Bihar, it had been a famous centre of brahmanic learning in the east ever since the Later Vedic Age. In the remote past, the country round about Mithila was known as Videha. It continued to enjoy protection under its indigenous hindu chieftains who retained their hold over the region as the feudatories of the muslim rulers. Mithila was ruled over by the Karnata dynasty from c.1150 to 1395, followed by the Kameshwara dynasty whose rule lasted upto 1515 A D. It was followed by yet another ruling house, founded by Mahesh Thakur, in the time of Akbar; they were feudatories of the Mughal empire. Mithila had thus a very long tradition of ancient Indian scholarship and learning and it continued to flourish during the medieval period.[11] Under the Kameshwara dynasty, one of Mithila's scholars, Jagaddhara wrote commentaries on a variety of tests including *Bhagwad Gita*, *Meghaduta* and *Malati-Madhava*. One of its poets, Vidyapati, the author of *maithili* songs, inspired the writers of Bihar and Bengal for a long time. Ganesa Upadhyaya (c.1093-1150 A D.) founded the school of *navya nyaya*—'new logic' at Mithila and wrote his 'epoch-making work', entitled *Tattva Chintamani* which comprised about 300 pages but whose 'commentaries make up over 1,000,000 pages in three centuries of its study'.[12] One of the great masters of Mithila was Mahesh Thakur who flourished during the reign of Akbar. It is said that one of his pupils, Raghunandan Das Rai, 'an accomplished logician, went out on an intellectual *dig-vijaya* at the instance of emperor Akbar who, pleased with his performance, made a gift to him of the whole tract of Mithila which, in turn, the loyal pupil transferred to his guru as his fee for teaching him (*gurudakshina*). Mahesh Thakur thus became the founder of the Darbhanga Raj family.'[13] The University of Mithila had adopted a very peculiar system of examination to assess the students' performance for graduation or completion of study; it was called *salaka-pariksha* by which a candidate for graduation had to explain that page of a manuscript which was pierced last by a needle run through it. It

was 'a test of the capacity of the candidate to explain unprepared any part of the texts he had studied so as to demonstrate his mastery of the subject in all its parts'.[14]

University of Nadia: A small islet called *navadvipa* or Nadia, situated on the Bhagirathi at its confluence with Jalangi in Bengal, developed as an important seat of hindu learning after the destruction of the buddhist universities of Nalandaand Vikramasila by the muslim armies of invasion. The town of Nadia seems to have been founded by the Pala kings of Bengal although it roe into prominence when king Lakshmansena (1178-1205) of Gauda made it his seat of governance. Lakshmansena was a great patron of art and learning; his court was adorned by a galaxy of distinguished scholars and writers who built up the reputation of Nadia as a seat of ancient Indian knowledge and wisdom. Halayudha, the prime minister of Lakshmansena, was a renowned scholar who wrote a number of books, including *Smriti Sarvasva* and *Nyaya Sarvasva*, while his court-poet Jayadeva composed 'the immortal *Gita-Govinda*, a masterpiece of literature of any age or clime'. Nadia fell into the hands of muslim armies led by Muhammad bin Bakhtiyar Khalji in 1197 when its Sena ruler retreated to the eastern Bengal and set up his headquarters at Vikrampura. Nevertheless, the muslim conquerors of Bengal who 'did not interfere with the religion and culture of the people and the indigenous social institutions, accorded protection to the magnificent educational buildings and libraries of Nadia. Accordingly, Nadia continued to flourish as a famous hindu seat of learning throughout the medieval period.

Early medieval Bengal is known for yet another hindu seat of higher education which was set up by king Rama Pala (1084-1130) at Ramavati on the *banks* of the Ganges and its tributary Karatoya in Varendra region. The university lasted about a century until it was destroyed by the muslim invaders in 1203 A.D; but, in spite of its relatively short span of life, it made substantial contributions towards the advancement of ancient education and literature through its scholars such as Vibhutichandra, Danasila, Subhakara and MokshakarGupta.[16]

The valley of Kashmir with its headquarters at Srinagar deserves special mention as the repository of ancient *brahmanic* as well as *buddhistic* literary traditions; it remained an important centre of higher education and learning throughout the early medieval period. Being surrounded by lofty mountains and isolated from the plains, it remained outside the sphere of influence of the sultanate of Delhi, its indigenous hindu rulers foiled all attempts of the muslim invaders to establish their foothold there till the second quarter of the fourteenth century. The credit for the establishment of muslim rule there goes to Shah Mirza, an inhabitant of Swat, who overthrew the ruling family of his hindu patron in 1339 and ascended the throne with the title of Shamsuddin Shah. One of his descendants, styled Zainul Abidin (1420-70), is famous in the

history of Kashmir for his policy of religious toleration and public welfare activities; he has been called the 'Akbar of Kashmir'. In order to respect the religious sentiments of hindus, who constituted the majority of his subjects, he abolished *jaziya*, banned the slaughter of cows and extended liberal patronage to Sanskrit language and literature. Akbar the Great conquered Kashmir and made it part and parcel of the Mughal empire in 1555 A.D; by that time ancient hindu system of higher education had been revived throughout the length and breadth of the country; therefore, Srinagar continued to flourish as an important centre of Sanskrit studies throughout the medieval period. Students from all parts of the country flocked to the *ashramas* of *brahman* scholars and sages of Kashmir to receive instructions in religious and secular subjects. Apart from Nalanda and Vikramasila, Kashmir supplied the maximum number of *brahman* and *buddhist* scholars and missionaries for the spread of Indian religion and culture in Tibet and China; it continued to do so in the medieval age too when the names of Nalanda and Vikramasila had become a thing of the past. Of course Dipankara Sri Jnana, popularly known as Acharya Atisa, who worked as missionary in Tibet from 1040 to 1053 A.D., hailed from Gauda (Bengal); he was vice-chancellor of the Vikramasila university when he accepted an invitation from the Tibetan ruler Chan Chub to visit Lhasa. He received a rousing reception at Lhasa amidst 'songs of welcome sung by all the people' and was 'conducted to the king by an escort of 300 horsemen. It was he who purged Tibetan *buddhism* of its many and gross corruptions which had crept into it in time and founded the new religion of Lamaism'. He died at Nethan near Lhasa at the age of 73 and left an indelible 'influence in Tibet mainly through his works showing him as the greatest writer on Tibetan buddhism on which about 200 works are ascribed to him, mostly on *vajrayana*.' Acharya Atisa was also a great scholar in Tibetan language into which he translated twenty-two Sanskrit works from India. Ratnavajra, a Kashmiri brahman in Tibet, translated fourteen Sanskrit works into Tibetan while Maitreya Bhadra, a scholar of Sanskrit from *Aryavarta*, acted as the *rajguru* of the Chinese emperor as late as 1110 A.D; Srinagar has given us the only standard work on indigenous historical literature in three volumes, bearing the common title *Rajatarangini*, prepared by Kalhana Pandit and others.

The rajput rulers of early medieval India were not only patrons of learning and literature but quite a few of them were themselves scholars of repute. Their courts adorned numerous Sanskrit scholars —poets and writers of national fame who kept the torch of ancient Indian literary tradition burning. Dhar and Ujjain were the famous centres of learning in the Malwa. The Parmar Raja Bhoja of Dhar (1000-55), popularly known as Bhojadeva or Dharesvara, was a prolific author who wrote on a variety of subjects including Sanskrit grammar, poetics, astrology, yoga and medicine. Srichandra wrote commentaries on *Mahapurana* of Pushpadanta. Asadhara composed

more than twenty works of which *Sagar Dharamamrita* and *Anagara Dharamamrita* were very popular; it is said that Asadhara wandered from place to place 'due to fear of harassment by the muslim raiders' and stayed in the courts of five different rajput chieftains during the course of his wanderings. Amitagati, a jain scholar, received honours from the hands of three parmar rulers, Munja, Bhoja and Sindhula of Malwa. Hemachandra Suri (1088-1172), a versatile genius of Gujarat, was a born poet and scholar of Sanskrit and Prakrit; he converted king Kumarpala to jainism and wrote numerous books, poetic compositions and religious treatises. One of his works entitled *Trishashti Salakapurusha Charita* describes in ten cantos the lives of 63 best persons according to the jain traditions. Hemachandra narrates the life-history and achievements of his royal disciple in a unique Sanskrit-cum-Prakrit epic entitled *Kumarapala Charita*. His book *Kavyanusasan*, written in the form of *sutra* and *vriti*, along with its commentary, called the *Viveka*, constitutes a complete manual of poetics in eight chapters.[18] Vadiraja, a great logician and poet of Gujarat, flourished at the court of Jaisimha Siddhraja, the Chalukya ruler of Vatapi (1102-43). Ramchandra (1110-73), a pupil of Hemachandra, has to his credit eleven plays, including *Yadu Vilasa*, *Satya Harishchandra*, *Rohini-Mriganka*, etc. Hastivarman was another genius of the age as a dramatist who produced *Vikranta Kaurava*, *Maithili Kalyana*, *Anjana Prananjaya*, and *Subhadra*.

Literary Achievements of South India

South India, beyond the Vindhyas, had a glorious record of its own literary achievements before the establishment of muslim rule and the rise of Bahmani and Vijayanagar kingdoms[19] there. As we are all aware, the foundations of ancient Indian culture were laid 'by the fusion of Indo-Aryan and pre-Aryan elements in varying conditions and proportions'. The South came under the fold of Aryan culture at a comparatively later date; accordingly, the Indian languages, literature and institutions, in the south, faithfully preserved 'much more of pre-Aryan India than anywhere else'.[20] With the exception of the marathas, who constituted 'the southernmost of Indo-Aryan speaking peoples of India' the rest of the southern peninsula, beyond the Vindhyas, spoke the Dravidian languages, including Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kannada. With the gradual aryanisation of the south, Sanskrit, with its rich religious and socio-cultural heritage, came to occupy a position of respect and dignity with the ruling elite and the priestly class; nevertheless, the literary development of the south was marked by the simultaneous growth of Dravidian languages, almost hand in glove with Sanskrit and its Prakrit variations.

The process of aryanisation of the south had started in the first millennium B.C.; it received impetus with the rise of buddhist and jain movements in the sixth century B.C. Major part of south

India was incorporated in the Mauryan empire (322-185 B.C.) which welded the inhabitants of the Indian subcontinent into a great nation and played a significant role in bringing about socio-cultural synthesis between the north and the south. The Pandyas, the Cholas and the Cheras of the extreme south retained their separate political entities *albeit* they also felt the deep impact of the countrywide cultural forces and merged their identity with the Indian nationhood by the beginning of the Christian era. Political vacuum created by the decline of the Mauryan empire was filled in by the rise of the *Sungas* (185-73 B.C.) and *Kanvas* (73-28 B.C.) in the north and the Andhra-Satavahanas (230 B.C.-225 A.D.) in the south. The latter gradually overran the whole of the Deccan, western and central India and a part of the Indo-Gangetic valley, including *Magadha*, and emerged as an all India power. The various *Puranic* texts show wide differences in their statements regarding the number of the Satavahana kings and the period of their rule; we have reason to believe that this dynasty produced about two dozens of the monarchs who ruled for more than four hundred years. The interesting controversy regarding the race and origin of the Andhra-Satavahanas itself reveals their true nationalistic character; 'the lords of the three oceans' carried in their veins a mixture of aryan and dravidian blood and represented the composite Indian culture, formed by the synthesis of aryan and dravidian elements almost in equal proportions. Accordingly, the educational system and literature of south India also showed two streams of aryan and dravidian elements respectively, running parallel to and yet intermingling freely with each other. As a matter of fact, it was the introduction of Sanskrit as a vehicle of religion and culture which provided the first important medium of expression to the men of education and learning in the south; it has rightly been asserted that Sanskrit played the role of a 'magic wand whose touch alone raised each of the dravidian languages from the level of a patois to that of a literary idiom' although 'the influence they exercised on one another was also not inconsiderable'.[21]

Apastamba, a scholar of Sanskrit, who prepared south Indian versions of quite a few vedic texts, flourished in the Godavari valley sometime in the third century B.C; the Sanskrit language used by him 'seems to be of an age preceding that of Panini, and the followers of his school abound in the land south of the Narbada'.[22] The Sanskrit school of Satyashadha Hiranyakesins, whose *dharamasutra* shows 'clear traces of Apastamba's influence' acquired prominence in the Malabar and south *Kanara* region between the first century B.C. and the first century A.D. The Sanskrit compositions of these scholars bear 'influences of the idiom of the dravidian languages'.[23] During the Vakataka-Gupta age (320-550 A.D.), south India became a repository of Indian art and learning while the south Indian scholars assumed the role as the custodians of hindu cultural heritage, including education and learning in Sanskrit and the dravidian languages when the north fell a victim to the invasions

of the Hunas. During the early medieval period, therefore, it was the south which faithfully preserved and jealously safeguarded the ancient Indian cultural heritage to the best of its capacity until the muslim arms struck a serious blow to it under the command of Alauddin Khalji and his military generals.

The earliest collection of Tamil literature now available, called 'the Sangam literature', belongs to the first three or four centuries of Christian era; the word 'sangam' in Tamil means a college or an institution of higher learning comprising the corporate activity of a number of scholars. The collection includes 2,279 poems by 473 poets, including some women, and the whole literature is grouped in eight anthologies, six of which are prefaced, in the form of invocations, by the poems composed by Perundevanar of Madura who popularised the concept of *Bharatam*.[24] It shows that a national college (*sangam*) of Tamil poets flourished in Madura. obviously under the royal patronage of the Pandya rulers in the extreme southern tip of the peninsula. Almost all the indigenous ruling dynasties, big or small, of the south, including the Pandyas, the Cheras, the Cholas, the western Chalukyas of Vatapi or Badami (547-753 A.D.), the Pallavas (575-895), the Rashtrakutas (753-973), Later or Eastern Chalukyas of Kalyani (973-1190), the Hoysalas of Dwarsamudra, the Kakatiyas of Warrangal, and the Yadavas of Deogiri, were patrons of education and learning in Sanskrit and dravidian languages. Tamil language and literature developed side by side with Sanskrit whereas the origin of Kannada, Telugu and Malayalam as distinct languages can be traced back to the sixth and seventh centuries of the Christian era. Before the penetration of the khalji arms, the whole of south India was studded with institutions of higher learning in Sanskrit and dravidian languages. For instance, during the reign of the Pallava monarch Vijayanripatunga Varman, three villages were gifted by the state to support a college which offered specialised study in four *Vedas*, six *Vedangas*, a *mimansa*, *nyaya*, *puranas* and *dharamsastras*, 'like the Ganga, supported by Siva on his matted locks'.[25] A village created an endowment fund in 1023 A.D., during the rule of Rajendra Chola I for the establishment of a Vedic college at Ennayiram (south Arcot district) providing for free board and tuition of 340 students and ten teachers.[26] Similarly, a Sanskrit college, attached to the Trayi-Purusha temple at Salotgi (modern Bijapur district) had twenty-seven hostels for the residence of its students and teachers who hailed from all over India; it was run by the state patronage and public charities.[27]

Muslim System of Education

The muslim system of education, like its hindu counterpart, was religious in nature; its primary object was to propagate Islam and 'spread the light of learning among the faithful'. Its analogy with the latter ends at this very stage, however. In Islam, the state itself was treated as subservient to religion; it was defined as

'an instrument to serve the creed in the attainment of its objectives or fulfilment of ideals of the muslim brotherhood';[28] therefore, the state patronage to and control over the muslim system of education were the logical outcome of this theocratic concept. Hence it was that the muslim system of education in India was planted and patronised by the sultans of Delhi and other muslim rulers of early medieval India. The *sadr* or 'the minister in charge of the ecclesiastical department and religious endowments' was *ipso facto* the head of the education department as well. He was the Chief representative or spokesman of the *ulama* who shared power of the state in association with the *umara* or the *ahl e saif*. It has been explained earlier how the *ulama* or the *ahl e qalam*, viz; the muslim theologians, scholars, and civil and judicial administrators, constituted the brain of the turkish rule in India, of which *umara* or the *ahl e saif* formed the sword-arm. The state lubricated the financial wheels of education, and exercised general supervision and control over it whereas the *ulama* determined the educational policy and managed the educational institutions. The centres of higher learning, called the *madrasas*, were almost exclusively financed by the state while the primary schools, called *maktabs*, formed a part of or were associated with the *masjids*, *khanqahs darghahs*, and other holy shrines or places of worship. These were run by liberal financial aid from the state and its officials as well as public charities. The state which stood for the propagation and glory of Islam wanted 'a certain type of men' and the *ulama* who 'were the educators from top to bottom, were interested in the creation of orthodox muslims capable of maintaining the supremacy of Islam and of preserving the separate identity of the muslim community';[29] thus 'the aims and objects of the two' being identical', they cooperated with each other in the perpetuation of a theocratic system of education. There being perfect harmony between the objectives of the state and the *ulama*, 'the state patronage for education was great but education was not dictated. The teachers were free to form their syllabus and teach the subjects they liked, religion being always an inseparable part of it'.[30]

The *maktabs*, like the *pathshalas* of the hindus, were usually attached to *masjids* and shrines. A *mulla* or *maulvi*, in charge of a *masjid*, however small, in each muslim locality or *mohalla*, would run a single-teacher *maktab* within the premises of the *masjid* itself; sometimes he might, like a brahman teacher, hold the classes in his own house. According to an Islamic tradition, a child should be sent to the school when he was 'four years, four months and four days old'. A *bismillah* ceremony, similar to the *upanayana* of the hindus, was performed at an appropriate time, fixed in consultation with an astrologer. A wealthy child might receive elementary lessons in education from a tutor at his parental house; the practice of appointing *ataliqs* or tutors for imparting education to the children of nobility and the princes was common; these tutors were paid handsomely by their patrons. Otherwise, education

was free and open to all without discrimination; *albeit* having been based essentially on the study of the Islamic scriptures, it automatically deprived the hindu children from benefiting from it. The first lesson started with the recitation of the opening sentence of the *qalima* by the *maulvi* which the pupil was asked to repeat. The teacher then wrote a few letters of the alphabet on the *takhti*—'the wooden writing board' with black ink and pen of reed, and the pupil was instructed to handle the pen properly and move it over the written letters or in imitation thereof so as to make him familiar with the word-forms. The initial education consisted in memorising certain parts of the *Quran* which were deemed essential for every muslim to remember for the purpose of his daily prayers. The elementary knowledge in the *three Rs* was imparted through the Persian language while oral instruction, accompanied by memorisation of the religious texts, was given in Arabic; thus a child was made familiar with the Arabic and Persian languages almost simultaneously. Once he was able to read and write simple sentences, he was taught elementary rules of grammar and asked to study small books, containing short stories, poems or lessons in *Hadis* written in simple language. The knowledge received by a child in arithmetic was just enough for him to undertake simple financial transactions or maintain accounts as a householder or businessman when he grew up.

The institutions of higher learning in Arabic and Persian were called *madrasas* or *jamias*, comparable to modern secondary schools or colleges. These were established by the sultans and their provincial governors at central or provincial headquarters and other important towns which contained a sufficiently large number of the muslim aristocracy. Like the hindu *gurukuls*, these were also residential institutions; accordingly, a *madrasa* had extensive boarding and lodging arrangements for its students as well as teachers although a fairly large number of the day scholars, belonging to the local populace of the town, also received education there. A *madrasa* had invariably to be a state enterprise because its cost of establishment and maintenance was very high. A great virtue of the muslim system, like its hindu counterpart, was that education from the elementary school to the highest level was free but, unlike the hindu teachers, the muslim scholars, particularly the subject-specialists of repute in these *madrasas* were paid handsomely and were well-provided for their families. The establishment of a *madrasa*, like a modern college or residential university, was a comprehensive enterprise which needed organised and concerted efforts to materialise whereas hindu institutions of higher learning came into existence by the individual and selfless efforts of the teachers themselves and were supported by the public through voluntary contributions, donations or charities. On the other hand, the number of muslims in India being very small, the state had to undertake responsibility for the promotion of higher learning; the *madrasas* which catered to an exotic system of education, had to be planted on the Indian soil; these did not grow out of the socio-cultural environment of

the country. That is why some of the reputed *madrasas* of the medieval age declined in importance with the change of dynasties or passed out of existence when the hands that fed them were no more.

The contemporary literature, particularly the *Ijaz i Khusravi*, gives us a glimpse of the curriculum adopted by the various *madrasas* of early medieval age. Apart from advanced study in the languages and literature of Persian and Arabic, and the Islamic studies, viz; *manqul*—'theology', *tafsir*—'exposition of scriptures', *hadis*—'traditions of the Prophet', and *fiqh*—'jurisprudence', the secular subjects of higher education comprised *riyazi*—'mathematics', *kalam*—'scholasticism', *najum*—'astronomy', *akhlaqiat*—'ethics', *falsafa*—'philosophy', *tasawwuf*—'mysticism', *mantic*-'logic', *tawarikh* —history' and *maqulat*—'rational sciences'; the last-named subject comprised an elementary knowledge of modern biology, physics and chemistry. We find references to a number of popular text-books on various subjects written by Indian and foreign scholars which were prescribed by the institutions and made available to the students of higher education. Each *madrasa* had a library of its own with valuable collections of popular text-books and rare manuscripts. In the absence of the printing press, books could be multiplied by the scribes alone; therefore the art of calligraphy was 'highly prized'; almost every scholar was taught to be a good calligraphist. On the whole the *madrasa* laid stress on religious studies linguistics and abstract subjects which were not conducive to the development of scientific outlook or broadmindedness among the scholars; the methods of teaching were also stereotyped. The scholars said their prayers in the college and the *Quran* was invariably recited everyday by those who had memorised its text by heart. The teachers lectured in the class-rooms while religious discourses and seminars were also a common feature. The colleges produced good muslim theologians of conservative habits and high moral character, though narrow-minded and sectarian in outlook, in general. By and large the *madrasas* amply fulfilled the objectives for which they were brought into existence.

Contributions made by the Sultans towards the Promotion of Learning

Long before the establishment of the sultanate of Delhi, the arab governors of Sind were the first to open *maktabs*, usually attached to the mosques, for religious studies in Arabic on the Indian soil. Mahmud of Ghazni, who is notorious in the history of India for his loot and plunder, was no barbarian at home. He was a patron of art and learning in whose times flourished a galaxy of scholars, poets and artists. They included, among others, Alberuni, Baihaqi, Utbi, Firdausi, Unsari — the poet laureate, and Farabi — the philosopher, all of whom are known to the students of medieval Indian history for their valuable literary contributions. Ghazni and its people benefited immensely from their monarch and his fabulous wealth. Mahmud spent lavishly to make his seat

of governance one of the finest cities of Asia; he erected magnificent mosques and huge palaces, established a university, an imperial library and a museum which stored invaluable trophies of war. His son and successor Masud opened the first *madrasa* for the promotion of higher learning in Persian and Arabic at Lahore. It was he who persuaded Alberuni in his old age to accept *madad e muash* from the royal court so that he might devote his time peacefully to literary pursuits. From Alberuni's writings we can 'get an insight into the rapid progress that Arabic and Persian literatures were then making in laying under contribution the rich store of knowledge imbedded in both Sanskrit literature and Greek. Indian mathematics and astronomy, philosophy, medicine and pharmacology were favourite subjects of study with the muslim scholars, and translations of Indian works including a large portion of narrative literature into Arabic and Persian were fast being made by these energetic and inquisitive students'.[31] Qutubuddin Aibek, the first muslim viceroy of Delhi under Muhammad Ghori *alias* Muizuddin, built the first *masjid* with an attached institution for higher education in Islamic theology at his seat of governance, probably during the life-time of his master; it was called *Madrasa i Muizzi*. Aibek was a man of letters who had received his earlier education in Persian and Arabic at Nishapur; he prepared the ground for the spread of the muslim system of education in India at the grassroots 'by the establishment of hundreds of mosques' which 'like the churches of Medieval Europe, were centres of both religion and learning'.[32] Nasiruddin Qabacha, governor of Multan under Qutubuddin Aibek, founded a *madrasa* at his seat of governance and put it under the charge of *maulana* Qutubuddin Kashani. Similarly, Muhammad bin Bakhtiyar Khalji and his succeeding governors in the east, opened institutions of higher learning in Bihar and Bengal. Altumish (1211-36) is said to have founded the *Nasiri Madrasa* at Delhi in memory of his eldest son Nasiruddin Mahmud who had died in the lifetime of his father. Because of the mongol upheavals in central Asia, hundreds of muslim theologians, scholars and artists fled their hearths and homes and sought shelter at the court of Altumish in Delhi; Amir Khusrau's father was one of them. Altumish extended liberal patronage to them and enriched the cultural life of the ruling elite. We hear of two *madrasas*, styled *Munizzi* and *Nasiri* at Delhi as referred to above, and one at Jalandhar which were in a flourishing condition during the reign of sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud (1246-66), the grandson and the last successor of Altumish. Minhajus Siraj, the illustrious author of the *Tabaqat i Nasiri*, acted as the principal of the *Nasiri Madrasa* for many years. During the reign of Ghiasuddin Balban (1266-86), the reputation of Delhi as an advanced centre of Islamic culture and learning spread far and wide. The attitude of the sultan towards the men of letters and sages was highly commendable; he is on record to have once advised the crown prince Muhammad thus:

> "Spare no pains to discover men of genius, learning and courage. You cherish them by kindness and munificence that they may prove the soul of your councils and instrument of your authority."[33]

Jalaluddin Khalji was known to be a man of 'marked literary taste' who 'used to pay learned men their due honour' and by whom 'a literary atmosphere was created about the royal court which did not exist in the previous reign'.[34] Alauddin Khalji was a semi-literate man who sternly curbed the power of the nobility and never permitted the *ulama* to interfere in state politics; he kept them in good humour and never antagonised the *mullas* and *sheikhs* through public criticism or ridicule. As usual, the muslim scholars, saints and the *mullas* continued to receive liberal patronage by the sultan; all posts in the judicial and educational establishments were reserved for them. The *ulama* were given a free hand in administering the educational institutions, courts, holy places, religious endowments and charitable funds. They also enjoyed sufficient freedom of action in tackling the socio-religious problems of the muslim community. A *madrasa* was built by Alauddin in the new township of Siri, adjacent to the *Houz i Illahi*; its building is said to have been repaired and renovated by Firoze Tughluq (1351-88) long after the death of Alauddin Khalji. Firishta tells us that during the reign of Alauddin 'palaces, mosques, universities, baths, mausolea, forts and all kinds of public and private buildings seemed to rise as if by magic. Neither did there in any age, appear such a concourse of learned men from all parts. Forty-five doctors, skilled in the services were professors in the universities'.[35] Barani complains that Alauddin 'did not appreciate scholarship', nevertheless, in the course of his narrative, he makes mention of forty-six learned men who received stipends from the royal court; some of them, according to the historiographer, 'surpassed the most erudite of Bukhara, Samarqand, Baghdad, Cairo, Damascus, Ispahan or Tabriz'.[36] Amir Khusrau adorned the courts of all the sultans of Delhi from Balban to Ghiasuddin Tughluq as the poet laureate; his invaluable compositions—*Mifthul Futhuh*, *Khazainul Futuh* or *Tarikh i Ilahi and Dewal Rani Khizr Khani* constitute the most authentic contemporary sources of history of the Khalji dynasty. Among those scholars who flourished during the reign of Alauddin Khalji, 'though they did not come under the royal patronage', may be mentioned the names of Tajuddin Ruknuddin, Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya and Sheikh Usman. The turkish nobles and provincial governors also 'upheld the cause of learning by their extensive liberality'. A very significant development in the literary field is noticeable during the reign of Alauddin Khalji. As the muslim rule in India was now more than a century old 'there had already begun a linguistic mingling and intercourse' between the hindus and muslims 'brought about by the pressure of natural laws'; it gave birth to the Urdu language, the first

important spokesman of which was none else but Amir Khusrau, the born poet and the greatest scholar of the age.

Muhammad bin Tughluq (1325-51) built yet another *madrasa* at Delhi with a mosque attached to it. Firoze Tughluq left a deep imprint on the educational system of the sultanate by using it as a vehicle primarily for the spread of Islamic religion and learning. He re-established the influence of the *ulama* in the state politics, constituted hundreds of mosques with *maktabs* attached to them, and at least thirty *madrasas* in various parts of his kingdom. The existing *madrasas* at the capital were liberally provided by the state. In order to meet the ever-increasing demand for higher education, Firoze Tughluq established yet another *madrasa*, known after him as *Madrasa i Firozeshahi*, in Delhi in 1352; Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi was appointed its principal. It was a double storeyed building situated in the heart of a beautifully laid-out garden along the *Houze i Ilahi*.[37] Amir Timur carried fire and sword in northwestern India in 1398-99, trampled Delhi under his feet, and gave a serious set-back to the socio-cultural life of the people; educational institutions and the libraries established so laboriously by the sultans suffered an irreparable loss.

Hindus Undertake the Study of Persian

The muslim system of education, based on Islamic studies and Arabic and Persian languages. was alien to the hindu civilisation and culture in every respect; it did not meet the religious, socio-cultural or literary traditions and aspirations of the indigenous population. Persian was made the court language and the educational institutions from top to bottom catered to the religious needs of the muslims primarily; therefore, the hindus, in general, stood aloof from them for about two hundred years. There might be cited a few 'stray cases of hindus prosecuting studies of the Muhammadan languages'[38] out of political exigency or with the object of securing gainful employment under the sultante *albeit*, by and large, they hesitated in sending their children to the *maktabs*, what to say of seeking their admission in the *madrasas* for higher education. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, therefore, the greatest achievement of the sultans was to inculcate love for the study of Persian and Arabic languages among the Indian converts to Islam or the Indian muslims so-called; it opened the gates of state services to them and resulted in the improvement of their socio-economic lot. The hindus were constrained to take up to the study of Persian language purely out of political and economic considerations; it opened for them the avenues for employment under the sultans.

Patronage by Sikander Lodhi (1489-1517): Some of the hindus, called *kayasths* or the scribes, seem to have picked up courage to send their children to *maktabs* by the beginning of the fourteenth

century to secure for them government service usually as clerks or accountants, particularly in the land revenue establishment, but it was during the reign of Sultan Sikander Lodhi that they took a fancy for the muslim system of education. The sultan welcomed the move and encouraged them to join the *madrasa* for higher education in Persian; obviously, the hindu students in *maktabs* and *madrasas* were exempt from participation in muslim prayers and the observation of other religious ceremonies. The sultan also encouraged the translations of indigenous literature into Persian for which the hindu scholars were very helpful. Under his orders, the *Argar Mahabedaka* or 'the science of medicine and treatment of diseases' was translated into Persian and given the new title as *Tibbi Sikandari;* this book, says Abdullah 'was the foundation of the practice of the physicians of Hind and was thus brought into general use'.[39] Rizqullah Mushtaqi adds to our information on this account as follows:

> "Mian Bhudh succeeded to the late Khwas Khan and was confirmed in the dignity (by Sultan Sikander Lodhi). He got together fine calligraphists and learned men, and employed them in writing books on every science. He brought books from Khurasan and gave them to learned and good men. Writers were continually engaged in this work. He assembled the physicians of Hind and Khurasan, and, collecting books upon the science of medicine, he had a selection made. The book so compiled received the name of *Tibbi Sikandari*, and there is no work of greater authority in India."[40]

Having once made an entry into the muslim system of education, the hindus never looked back; to quote Blochmann,

> "The hindus from the sixteenth century took so zealously to Persian education that before another century had elapsed, they had fully come upto the Muhammadans in point of literary acquirements."[41]

The credit for effecting willing participation of the hindus in this system of education goes largely to Sikander Lodhi who was himself a great scholar and poet; he composed with the *takhallus* or the pen-name of *Gulrukhi* (Rose-faced) and took delight in reciting the couplets in a melodious voice.[42] Sikander Lodhi shifted his headquarters from Delhi to Agra which became an educational centre before long. The sultan enjoyed the company of the learned and the sages; we are told that 'seventeen accomplished and learned men of tried merit were constantly with him in his private apartment ,'.[43] He used to attend with pleasure the class-room lectures of Sheikh Abdullah, one of the specialists in *maqulat* or the rational sciences.[44]

Origin of Kayasths as a Separate Caste : The *Kayasths* belong to one of the *profession-castes* of the hindus. They do dot find mention in the *Manusmriti* or the buddhist scriptures of the pre-Christian era. In the Puranic literature, however, we come across the gradual emergence of a new profession of the scribes, clerks and accountants, referred to by the common denomination of *kayasths*. In the Gupta administrative hierarchy we find the mention of *kayasths* as a distinct profession. They were employed in the revenue and finance departments, or were attached to the courts of the judges, and they performed all sorts of clerical work connected with the assessment and collection of taxes, maintenance of records and accounts, preparation of legal documents and attestation of official deeds, etc. The *kayasths* were drawn from the caste hindus, including *brahmins*, *kshatriyas* and *vaishyas* though, in the Puranic literature, they were clubbed with the low-caste people and were hated and despised by the priestly class among the *brahmins*. Kalhana, the author of *Rajatarangini*, talks of the *kayasths* as accountants and tax-gatherers who incurred the wrath of the *brahmins* because they 'raised their taxes from all, and exempted none'. *Yajnavalkya* advises the king to protect his subjects from the cheats, aggressors, thieves, robbers and the *kayasths* or 'the tax-gatherers'. Different legends are prevalent among the *kayasths* themselves to account for their origin. According to one legend, they are the descendants of the sage Kashyapa, through his son Kusa, while another legend informs us that 'after the creation of the *kshatra-varna* by Brahma, the *kshatriyas* were broken-hearted by the destructive acts of Parasurama, and that those who were not so discouraged were called kayasths'.[45] Yet another legend holds that a great sage called Kachara, 'who derived his origin from Brahma, and having his residence in the town of Kulancha, was gratified with the services of a *sudra* and granted him the boon of having a son who became the ancestor of the caste of *kayasths*.'[46] R.C. Dutt had expressed the opinion that the *kayasths* were recruited mainly from the kshatriyas and the vaishyas; 'brahmins would scarcely condescend to take up such appointments and *sudras* had not the necessary qualifications.[47] The *kayasths*, among the hindus, were probably the first to offer their collaboration to the muslim administrators of Delhi. The latter allowed them to hold subordinate services in the new administrative set-up and depended heavily upon them in establishing their contacts with their hindu subjects. Obviously, the *kayasths* were the first to learn Persian language with a view to striking an amicable equation with their new masters and seeking their favours. By the time of Sikander Lodhi a large number of hindus had started learning Persian and Arabic languages of their own accord; accordingly, the sultan facilitated their entry into the *madrasas* for higher education and began to offer them offices of responsibility. By virtue of their profession and close association with the muslims, the *kayasths* did not observe the traditional caste

restrictions and taboos, including the notorious concept of untouchability. They adopted not only the language of the ruling elite but also imitated them in their dress, food-habits and manners. They were looked down upon by the caste-hindus because they were supposed to degrade themselves by the pursuit of their 'humiliating profession'. By the beginning of the sixteenth century, the *kayasths* had emerged as a distinct profession-caste among the hindus who occupied a position somewhere between the caste-hindus, viz; *brahmins*, *kshatriyas* and *vaishyas*, and the low-castes or the *sudras*. They were usually dubbed as opportunists who disgraced themselves in offering their collaboration to the foreign muslim rulers of India for the sake of livelihood. The times of Akbar were yet far off when the hindus as a whole would get the opportunity to enter the *madrasas* and receive higher education in Persian and Arabic without defiling their caste, and move shoulder to shoulder with the muslim scholars and administrators on status of equality and as full-fledged citizens of the medieval Indian state.

3: Genesis of the Urdu Language

The birth of Urdu was an important outcome of the interaction between Persian and Arabic and the indigenous Indian languages and dialects in the medieval period. The earliest specimens of Urdu as a spoken dialect of the *Dehlavis* or 'the inhabitants of Delhi', the capital of the sultanate, become available to us during the Khalji rule, in the beginning of the fourteenth century. The first scholar who is known to have made use of this dialect in his literary compositions was Amir Khusrau, the born poet and literary stalwart of the age.

The evolution of Urdu language has had a chequered history. In aboriginal mongol language, the word *urdu* was synonymous with *lashkar* which implied 'a horde' or 'camp'; usually the troops of tartar and other nomadic tribes of central Asia, out of contempt and ridicule, were referred to as *urdu* or *lashkar*. The military camp or headquarters of the mongol chiefs were likewise known as *urdu*. The term *urdu*, which later on became a part of the Persian vocabulary too, carries the same literal meaning, viz., 'a camp' even today. This term was initially used in India also with reference to the armed bodyguards of the sultans or their royal armies. The muslim soldiery, as a matter of fact, was composed of numerous hordes of heterogeneous tribes and peoples from various parts of central Asia who spoke many and varied regional languages and dialects with the predominance of Persian and Arabic, of course. Literary or academic education was conspicuous by its complete absence among the military ranks; nevertheless, the soldiers had to communicate with the conquered people of the foreign lands. In India the problem of conversation and communication of thought

posed an entirely new challenge to them because the Indian literary heritage based on Sanskrit and its manifold *prakrit* languages and dialects was radically different from the Persian and Arabic stocks. This hurdle was crossed by the immigrants when they bridged the gulf by soldier-like pick and choose between the words and phrases of the two diverse linguistic fields which gave rise to a spoken dialect, referred to as the *Zaban i Urdu i Mualla*—'the language of the exalted army' or simply the *Zaban i Urdu*. This heterogeneous language became known, in the first instance, as *Dehlavi*, *Hindavi* or *Hindwai*. By the beginning of the fourteenth century it had become prevalent not only among the turkish soldiery but also the populace of Delhi and other urbanised centres of the sultanate. Nevertheless, its impact was felt most in Delhi, the metropolis of the sultanate, where the foreign immigrants and the Indians, including the hindu converts to Islam, had to deal with one another at all the social levels.

Quite a few theories have been put forward by the modern researchers about the origin and growth of the Urdu language none of which gives the complete answer. The seeds of this language seem to have been sown in northwestern India or the Punjab where the Ghaznavids held their sway for three quarters of a century before the establishment of the sultanate. It were the Ghaznavids who grafted the Persian and Arabic languages over the indigenous language of this region which may vaguely be referred to as Punjabi although Punjabi[48] as a vernacular language owes its development to a much later period. When Delhi was conquered by Muhammad Ghori, a large number of military officers and soldiers, belonging to the erstwhile Ghaznavid kingdom of Lahore, migrated to the Gangetic valley as a part of the forces of occupation; they brought their spoken dialect of Indo-Turkish origin to Delhi. In those days, the people of the cis-Sutlej region (modern Haryana), including Delhi, spoke the Hariani or Haryanvi, one of the Hindi dialects. According to one version, the spoken dialect of the Delhi region in the thirteenth century was *Khari Boli* and not *Hariani*. Whatever the case, both of these dialects exercised a profound impact on the genesis of what became known as *Dehlavi* or the *Hindavi* language of Amir Khusrau's days. At a later stage, when Sikander Lodhi transferred his headquarters from Delhi to Agra, the Dehlavi language was further enriched by *Brajbhasha* and *Rajasthani*, the two other Hindi dialects of Agra and Ajmer respectively. Thus the *Zaban i Urdu* or 'language of the army' developed as a composite language by the synthesis of the two exotic languages—Persian and Arabic, and the various indigenous dialects, including the *Panjabi*, *Hariani*, *Khari Boli*, *Brajbhasha* and *Rajasthani*.

Dehlavi or *Hindavi* was the mother of what subsequently became known as Urdu and Hindi languages respectively. During the early stages of development, both of these languages were identical

with the exception of their scripts. Some muslim scholars began to use the Persian script for expressing their sentiments in *Dehlavi* or the *Zaban i Urdu* in the fourteenth century when it was in its stage of a spoken dialect. Amir Khusrau, one of the pioneers of the language, seems to have taken the initiative in this matter. The hindu writers, on the other hand, employed the indigenous Devanagiri script for writing the same language. It made all the difference. As soon as *Dehlavi* or the *Zaban i Urdu* was put to writing, the muslim scholars showed the tendency to use not only Persian and Arabic vocabulary more profusely but also copied the syntax, similes and themes from those languages to give it a literary form, thus bringing into existence what became known simply as the Urdu language. The same *Dehlavi* language, when written in Devanagari script, assumed the name of Hindi (from the original *Hindavi* of Amir Khusrau) with the passage of time; it drew more heavily upon the indigenous literary stock based on Sanskrit.

Amir Khusrau as Pioneer of Urdu Language

As mentioned earlier, the sultans had introduced Persian as the court language. It was not intelligible to the Indian masses, including even the local converts to Islam. The credit for recognising *Dehlavi* or *Hindavi* as a language of the masses goes to Amir Khusrau who made frequent use of it in his poems and other literary compositions. He has rightly been acclaimed 'the first prominent representative of Indo-Muslim culture' who took pride in his country of domicile and favoured free give-and-take or synthesis between the local and exotic traditions in all walks of life, including education and learning. Amir Khusrau belonged to an aristocratic family of turkish immigrants who had settled in the Etah district of modern Uttar Pradesh; he was born at Patiali in c. 1252 A.D. Khusrau's father Shaifuddin was a *lachin turk*, *albeit* his mother was an Indian muslim; she was the daughter of Imadul Mulk, the Mir Bakhshi (Paymaster General) of Balban. Khusrau lost his father at the tender age of seven and was brought to Delhi to be looked after by his maternal grandfather in a highly aristocratic environment. He was brought up just like a prince in the company of the most privileged children of the turkish nobility of the capital. Khusrau grew up to be a youth of 'versatile talents' with intense love for letters and natural flair for poetry. He made his debut as a budding poet and singer in the aristocratic circles of Delhi while in his teens. His contact with the *khanqah* of Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya can also be traced back to his early age. He used to visit that place in the company of his grandparents and was sometimes encouraged to come on to the stage to recite poems and hymns in praise of God to the great delight of the audience. That set the stage for Khusrau's popularity with the aristocracy as well as the masses of Delhi almost simultaneously. He won the

affection of Sheikh Nizamuddin as one of his most brilliant pupils and earned the title of *Turkallah*—'the Turk of God' from the sage. In those days, *Dehlavi* or *Hindavi* language was gaining popularity at the religious discourses of the *sufi* saints; it had, in fact, been found to be the most useful vehicle of expression by them throughout the country for the peaceful propagation of Islam among the Indians. Amir Khusrau made liberal use of *Hindavi* in his poetic compositions through which he won the hearts of the commoners. Being a staunch nationalist, he declared with pride:

> "I am an Indian Turk, and shall answer your queries in *Hindavi* language;
> I can not speak in Arabic with Egyptian sweetness."[49]

Elsewhere he says:

> "I am a parrot of India; therefore, ask me something in *Hindavi* language so that I may sing a melody."[50]

According to Amir Khusrau, *Hindi* or *Zaban i Hind* stood no comparison with the Arabic language; nevertheless, he found it to be as good as Persian, probably for the purpose of poetic composition.[51] He actually uses the word *Hindi* (and not *Hindavi*) for the *Zaban i Hind* or the language of the Indian masses, which was as yet comparatively free from the Persian or Arabic vocabulary; he says:

> *Zaban i Hind ham tazi misaal ast,*
> *Keh amezash dar anja kam majaal ast.*[52]

Amir Khusrau has rightly been regarded as one of the founding fathers of modern Hindi language and literature as well, he is credited with the authorship of many poems, couplets, riddles and other popular sayings in Hindi. As the indigenous language did not find favour with the turkish aristocracy or the royal court, Khusrau made use of it just 'for fun and entertainment', particularly, with the object of sharing his sentiments with the commonfolk. He took delight in presenting a mixture of poetic compositions in Persian and Hindi, thus giving currency to the term *Rekhta* or mixture to such a literary hotchpotch. As for instance, he describes the beauty of a female curd-seller, probably from the modern Haryana region, as follows:

> *Gujari tau ke dar husno latafat choumahi,*
> *En dege dehi bar sare, tau chatre shahi;*
> *Az har do-labaat shahd o shakar mi rezad,*
> *Hargah ke gui keh dahi leho dahi.*

Similarly, mark the artistic skill of Amir Khusrau in providing alternate hemistiches in Persian and Hindi in the following *ghazel*:

Zehaal e miskin tughaful duraya naina banai battian,
Keh kalab e hijran na darum Aey Jaan! Na Lehun Kahe lagai chhatian?
Shaban e hijran daraz chun zulf, O' roze waslat cho umar kotah.
Sakhi! Piya ko jo main na dekhun to kaise katun andheri ratiyan?
.....
Bahaq roze wasal dilbar keh dadmara freb Khusrau
Peet man ki dawai rakhun, jo jane paun Piya ki guthian.[53]

As a matter cf fact, the two modern languages, now known as Urdu and Hindi respectively, were almost indistinguishable in the early medieval period. The gradually emerging *lingua franca* of the Indo-Muslim society was actually known as *Rekhta* or mixture of various languages in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. It has already been suggested how the use of two different scripts, Persian and Devanagari respectively, set the stage for the subsequent bifurcation of Urdu as distinct from the Hindi language. When written in the Persian script with the preponderant use of Persian and Arabic phraseology and syntax, it became known as Urdu.

Development of Urdu Language in the Deccan

Though born in the north as a spoken dialect, Urdu was never patronised by the sultans of Delhi nor did it occupy a place of respectability at the court of the Imperial Mughals (1526-1707). It was one of the later mughals, Muhammad Shah *alias* Rangila (171848) who replaced Persian by Urdu as his court language at Delhi. Nevertheless, Urdu attained the status of a written language in the Deccan in the fourteenth century. It penetrated into the south actually as *urdu* or 'the language of the *lashkar*' during the days of Alauddin Khalji. The muslim armies of occupation and the imperial officers from the north adopted *Urdu* or *Rekhta* as a mode of expression in their dealings with the people of the south. As such it drew heavily upon the south Indian languages, including Gujarati, Marathi, Telugu and Kanarese. Urdu was given preference over Persian as a court language by the Bahmanids and their successor states of Bijapur and Golconda, the detailed account of which has been given elsewhere in this study.

Notes

1. K.S. Vakil & S. Natarajan, *Education in India*, Allied Publishers, 3rd ed; 1966, p. 7.
2. R.K. Mookerji, *Ancient Indian Education*, Motilal Banarsidass, 3rd ed; 1960, p. 366.

3. B.N. Puri & others, *A Social, Cultural and Economic History of India*, Vol. II—"Medieval India", Macmillan, 1974, p. 147.
4. A.S. Altekar, *Education in Ancient India*, Benares, 1934, p. 337.
5. *ibid*, p. 326.
6. T.M. Thomas, *Indian Educational Reforms in Cultural Perspective*, S. Chand, 1970, p. 70.
7. Altekar, *Education in Ancient India, op. cit*, pp. 71-72.
8. F. E. Keay, *A History of Education in India and Pakistan*, OUP, 1964, p. 23.
9. *Bharadvaja* quoted in R.K. Mookerji, *Ancient Indian Education*, p. 210.
10. *ibid*, p. 203.
11. R. K. Mookerji, *Ancient Indian Education, op. cit.*, pp. 596-98.
12. *ibid*, p. 597.
13. *ibid.*
14. *ibid*, p. 598.
15. *ibid*, pp. 598-601.
16. *ibid*, p. 595.
17. R.K. Mookerji, *Ancient Indian Education, op. cit.*, pp. 590-92.
18. For details refer to *BVB* V, pp. 308, 310, 345-50 & 434-35.
19. For development of education and learning under the Bahmanids and the rulers of Vijayanagar, refer to chapter 7 of this study.
20. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, *A History of South India from Prehistoric Times to the fall of Vijayanagar*, OUP, 3rd ed, 1966, p. 1.
21. *ibid;* p. 340.
22. Nilakanta Sastri, *A History of South India, op. cit.*, p. 341.
23. *ibid.*
24. *ibid*, pp. 115-16.
25. R K. Mookerji, *Ancient Indian Education, op. cit.*, p. 369.
26. *ibid*, p. 368.
27. *ibid*, pp. 367-68.
28. *supra* ch. 1.
29. A.L. Srivastava, *Medieval Indian Culture, op. cit.*, p. 100.
30. U.N. Day, *Administrative System of the Delhi Sultanat*; Kitab Mahal, 1959, p. 162.
31. Sachau in his preface to *Alberuni's India, loc. cit.*
32. N.N. Law, *Promotion of Learning in India During Muhammadan Rule;* Calcutta, 1915), reprint by *Idarah i Adabiyat i Delli*, 1973, p. 19.
33. Firishta (Briggs), I, p. 267.
34. N.N. Law, *Promotion of Learning in India During Muhammadan Rule, op. cit.*, p. 30.
35. Firishta (Briggs), I, p, 376.
36. Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi, Bib. Indica*, pp. 341-67.
37. For details refer to Barani, *Tarikh i Firoze Shahi*, pp. 562-64; also K.A. Nizami, *Studies in Medieval Indian History and Culture*, pp. 73-79.
38. N.N. Law, *Promotion of Learning in India During Muhammadan Rule*, p. 76.
39. Abdullah, *Tarikh i Daudi, E & D* IV, p. 451.
40. *E & D* IV, p. 451 fn.
41. quoted in N.N. Law, *Promotion of Learning in India loc. cit.*, pp. 75-76.
42. A. Rashid, *Society and Culture in Medieval India*; Calcutta, 1969, p. 157.
43. Abdullah, *Tarikh i Daudi, E & D* IV, p. 446.

44. Badauni, *Muntakhabut Tawarikh*, 3 vols, *loc. cit.*, I, p. 323.
45. *BVB* V, pp. 477-78.
46. *ibid.*
47. Later Hindu Civilisation, *loc. cit.*, p. 83
48. Mahmud Sherani, in his treatise entitled *Punjab Mein Urdu*, names it specifically as the Punjabi language which is not correct.
49. *Turk i Hindostanium, Hindavi goim jawab;*
    Shakr i Misri nadram, kaz Arab goim sukham.
    —Refer to Khusrau's introduction to *Ghurrat ul Kamal.*
50. *Choman Tuti e Hindam, ar rast pursi*
    Baman Hindavi purs tu naghma goim.
51. In the midst of his description of Alauddin's conquests in the *Dewal Rani Khizr Khani* (a Persian composition), the poet makes a distraction to sing the praises of the *Zaban i Hind* as follows:

    Ghalat kardam as danish zavidam
    Na lafaz Hindi ast as Farsi kam
    Bajaz tazi keh mir har zaban ast
    Keh barjumla zabanha kumran ast;
    Va-gar ghalib zabanha dar-re o Rum
    Kam is Hindi astshud as andesha malum.
52. *ibid.*
53. An extract from the *Ghurrat ul Kamal.*

Chapter 6

Architectural Monuments of the Sultans

Building Activity of the Sultans—Its Rationale

The sultans of Delhi are known to have been great builders. They founded many new towns throughout their dominions which became flourishing centres of trade and commerce before long. They built royal palaces, forts, public buildings, mosques, *madrasas*, *dargahs* (monasteries), *serais* and mausoleums. Most of the buildings constructed by them have either disappeared altogether or lie in ruins *albeit* a large number of beautiful mosques and tombs built by the sultans or during their age have survived the wear and tear of time and constitute the living monuments of the sultanate period uptil this day. Of course, as regards the socio-cultural advancement of early medieval period, the sultans of Delhi made the greatest contribution in the domain of architecture. Their hectic building activity gave rise to what is usually styled as the Indo-Muslim architecture. The spirit of synthesis between the two cultural streams, which manifested itself in various spheres, was best expressed in the field of architecture; it was here that the blending of the two architectural styles—one indigenous and the other foreign, produced marvellous results almost instantaneously.

The scholars of ancient Indian history are aware that this country has had a very strong and well-developed architectural tradition going back to the pre-Christian era. The turko-afghan conquerors occupied the principal Indian towns which became the hubs of their political activity at the central, provincial and local levels. These were flourishing urban habitats of the hindus, adorned with magnificent buildings and public monuments *albeit* the sultans and their ruling *elite* were eager to maintain their separate identity as victors; therefore, they usually held themselves aloof from the residential quarters of the hindus.[1] To some extent, it was necessitated for reasons of their personal security as well. Moreover, they had a living style of their own and brought with them 'the Islamic tradition' of architecture which was quite distinct from that of the

ancient Indian art and architecture. There is a force in the arguments advanced by a modern scholar that 'the muslims had their own approach to the art of building both in form and spirit and in methods and materials of construction.'[2] The Islamic architectural tradition was conditioned by the concepts and practical needs of their religion and the geophysical background of the central Asian countries from which they had come. Accordingly, they initiated a vigorous architectural activity as a matter of necessity and taste and raised new townships, very often in close proximity to the ancient Indian towns, throughout the sultanate, for their official and personal residential purposes. The muslim rulers adopted Delhi as their capital where they constructed as many as seven new townships or building complexes in the neighbourhood of the old town during the period of their rule. Their provincial governors and local officers did likewise at their places of residence and administrative control. In the humble opinion of the author, their building activity was akin to 'the model town movement' which gained momentum in India after the dawn of independence, particularly, during the fifties of the present century, before it was overtaken by the subsequent mad rush for modernisation and unwieldy expansion of our towns and cities.

The Islamic Architecture So-Called

The central Asian tradition of architecture brought by the sultans to India is sometimes styled as 'the Islamic architecture' which is rather a misnomer. Arabia, where Islam took its birth, had no architectural traditions. The only structure of architectural interest, prevalent in that land, was 'the caravan roofless serai' built in a rectangular form with a gate and guard's post and small chambers, protected by strong peripheral walls. Of course, it left a distinct mark on the infant Islamic culture; the mosque is a replica of this *caravan serai*, with the additional provision of a prayer niche in the wall, situated opposite to the main gate.[3] With the spread of Islam in the various countries of central Asia, north Africa, and eastern Europe, their architects readily adopted the salient features of the architectural styles of these countries, resulting in the development of a composite Islamic architecture on which the Persian influence was predominant. According to an observation, 'the arabs had no arts of their own' and that the so-called 'Islamic art' was nothing but 'an adaptation to the requirements of their religion of indigenous elements, borrowed from the various nations which they overcame'.[4] Modern researches have laid bare the fact that ancient India had made, in times immemorial, a substantial contribution towards the development of art and architecture in the countries of central Asia, including Persia particularly. Therefore, the so-called 'Islamic architecture' brought by the sultans to Delhi had itself a considerable Indian share. No hair-splitting between the Indian and the Persian strains therein would help in clinching the issue when the

relationships between the two countries can be traced back to the prehistoric times.

Synthesis Between the Indigenous and 'Islamic' Traditions

The turko-afghan rulers of India observed no reservations in adopting the Indian forms and styles of architecture in spite of all the prejudices that they initially bore against the vanquished infidels; and their culture. Some of the factors responsible for the instant blending of the two architectural traditions were simply beyond their control. Being military adventurers, they did not bring any craftsmen or architectural experts with them to India. They had perforce to employ the Indian architects, masons, stone-cutters and other workers for the construction of their buildings. The Indian workers, with a rich experience of the indigenous styles, forms and methods of construction, introduced consciously or unconsciously, architectural designs and decorative details unknown to the muslims before. Secondly, the turkish rulers made extensive use of the rich architectural material obtained by the destruction and demolition of the hindu temples and other public buildings. Very often they took forced occupation of the magnificent hindu and jain temples and educational institutions and converted them into mosques by simply demolishing their roofs and idolatrous features and erecting domes and minarets in their place. As a consequence, the Indian concepts and forms of architecture were bound to have a deep imprint on the buildings of the sultans.

Difference Between Indigenous and 'Islamic' Architecture

Broadly speaking, the indigenous architecture was based on the general principle of 'beam and bracket' which enabled the construction of vast and sprawling building complexes of almost any dimensions. It was made possible by the erection of narrow columns and pillars, long beams and corbel brackets to support the flat roofs to which any number of storeys could be added. In technical language, this style is called *trabeate* which implies the use of rows of pillars and long beams, instead of arches and vaults, to span the spaces. Behind this most scientific and highly developed architectural principle lay the centuries of building experience and architectural heritage of the Indians which manifested itself in various art styles, shades and hues.[6] On the other hand, 'the Islamic style' was *arcuate* (bent like a bow or arched) which employed arches and vaults to bridge the spaces and envisaged the construction of graceful domes in place of flat roofs; obviously, such an art style was not very helpful in the construction of spacious palaces or multi-storey building structures. This was the basic difference between the two art styles variously termed as 'Indian' and 'Islamic' or 'hindu' and 'muslim' arts respectively; many other architectural differences between the two traditions formed but a corollary to it.

Among the other distinguishing features of the two art styles may be mentioned the 'solidarity and grace' or 'strength and beauty' of the Indian architecture; these two virtues, which were 'not to be found in the same measure' in any other architectural style of the world, were readily adopted by the sultans of Delhi in their building activities.[7] The most highly developed temple architecture, marked by its lofty *shikhars* and infinite richness and variety of sculptural forms was, of course, repulsive to the muslim mind. Both the art styles were decorative in their own way *albeit* their concepts of decoration were different. The 'hindu style' of ornamentation, though very rich in character, was 'expressive of natural, particularly human forms'. On the other hand, 'the decoration of the muslims, under religious injunction, avoided representation of living beings and took the form of flat surface ornament depicting arabesque or geometrical and floral patterns, inscriptions in various styles of writing, gilding and painting', etc. According to an art critic,

> "The Islamic architecture of India is an interesting story of these two seemingly opposite styles mingling with each other with varying degrees in different parts of the country at different periods of time, depending upon climatic conditions, type and availability of material and similar other factors. It is for this reason that the features of Indian style are found freely employed in the muslim monuments of India. The qualities of strength and grace, typical of the hindu monuments, were borrowed by the muslims, who also did not infrequently use the trabeate system."[8]

Three Phases of Development

The growth and development of 'the Indo-Islamic architecture' during the sultanate period took place in three phases. During the first phase were erected the buildings at Lahore, Ajmer and Delhi by the Slave and the Khalji monarchs; the construction of buildings by the Tughluqs constitutes the second phase, quite distinct and advanced from the earlier one. The construction of architectural monuments by the sultans of Delhi suffered a setback after the downfall of the Tughluq dynasty; *albeit*, by this time, the architectural activities had shifted to the provincial and regional capitals of the sultanate whose governors, particularly after declaring their independence, beautified their capitals by the erection of magnificent palaces, mosques and other public monuments. This marked the third phase of development of architecture during the period under review.

The First Phase: Architectural Monuments of the Slave and Khalji Sultans

Qutubuddin Aibek started with the construction of mosques as symbols of Islamic victory over the *infidel* lands. The mosques of

Quwat-ul-Islam at Delhi and *Adhai din ko Jhompra* at Ajmer were built by him out of the material of demolished hindu temples during the period of his viceroyalty. The construction of the former was undertaken by him immediately after the fall of Prithvi Raj Chauhan in the second battle of Tarain. It was raised on the plinth of a hindu temple and it contains a spacious hall, covered with a flat roof, supported by rows of pillars; the whole structure is a crude adaptation of the once magnificent hindu place of worship to which 'an Islamic touch' has been provided by 'an arched screen', containing calligraphic reproduction of the Quranic text, in front of the prayer-chamber. Similarly, the *masjid* at Ajmer was erected on the ruins of a Sanskrit college. It was occupied by the Marathas on the decline of the Mughal empire; it is said that they celebrated a festival there which lasted two days and a half; hence the name *Adhai din ka Jhompra*. The building complex raised by Qutubuddin Aibek round about the *Qila i Raj Pithaura* (viz; the fort of Prithvi Raj Chauhan) was the first of 'the seven cities of Delhi' built by the muslim rulers.[9] Aibek started the construction of the world-famous *Qutub Minar* in 1199 in the memory of a *sufi* saint Khwaja Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki;[10] it was completed by Altumish. Intended originally to be a part of the *masjid* from where the *muezzin* could issue a call to 'the faithful' for prayer, it, ultimately, emerged as a tower of victory 'to cast the shadow of God over the east and the west' as per an inscription carved on its surface. Made up of red sandstone, with the artistic grafting of white marble in its higher reaches, the Qutub Minar is a masterpiece of the Indo-Islamic technology and art; it was designed by the muslim architects but built by the hindu craftsmen. One of the highest and perhaps the most beautiful stone-towers, it is considered to be one of 'the seven wonders of the world'. Originally it comprised four storeys and was 225 feet in height with a circumference of 150 feet at the base, gradually tapering in its ascent. The fourth storey of the Minar was damaged by lightning and got repaired subsequently by Firoze Tughluq who replaced it by two smaller ones, thus raising the height of the tower to 240 feet. A circular stairway takes the visitors to the top of the tower while each of its five storeys is surmounted by a 'projecting gallery, encircling the tower; these balconies are supported by miniature arches, decorated with combwork of exquisite beauty'.

The tomb of Altumish, built by the sultan during his lifetime near the *Quwatul Islam* mosque, is a beautiful monument of the Persian art. It contains a single chamber, made up of red sandstone with an outer layer of grey granite. It has arched entrances on three sides and a *mehrab*, flanked by two small arched entrances on the fourth side. An entirely different type of tomb was built by Altumish on the grave of his son Nasiruddin Mahmud; it is called the *Sultan Garhi* and is situated in Malkapur at a distance of about three miles from the Qutub Minar. Its exterior is made of grey

granite stone and white marble while its inner base is octagonal in form and the roof is supported by beautiful pillars with decorative capitals and arches of the hindu architectural designs. Balban's tomb, situated to the southeast of *Qila i Rai Pithaura* is a square chamber, covered by a dome which has doorways on all sides. It is also furnished with the arches of the hindu style.

Alauddin Khalji took keen interest in the building activities. He prepared an elaborate plan for the extension of the architectural complex in the Qutub area. *Alai Darwaza*, 'a tresure-gem of Islamic architecture' was completed in 1311; it served as an entrance to the imperial campus. Its building consists of a square hall, covered by a dome, with arched doorways on each of its four sides. It is made of red sandstone, picked out by white marble strips and enriched by calligraphic inscriptions and decorative carvings. Alauddin built a new fort and the imperial township of *Siri*—the second of 'the seven cities of Delhi'. It was situated to the north of the Qutub complex and its foundation was laid in 1303. Here the sultan built a magnificent palace, *Mahal Hazar Satun*—'the palace of thousand pillars'. The entire town now lies in ruins and is located by the bare outlines of an erstwhile extensive tank, called the *Hauz i Illahi* or *Hauz i Khas*. Alauddin had also built the *Jamait Khana* mosque 'wholly in conformity with the muslim ideas', within the enclosure of Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya's shrine; it was extended during the Tughluq period.

The Second Phase: Buildings of the Tughluq Period

The early sultans displayed their vanity and splendour as conquerors of the land by spending lavishly on the construction of public buildings which were marked by elaborate ornamentation and decorative features of heterogeneous character. The Tughluq monarchs were more realistic in handling this work. They constructed beautiful buildings to provide more comfort and luxury to their dwellers at much less cost. Their buildings, though 'less elegant and artistic' in an abstract sense, were marked by simplicity and austerity. Ghiasuddin Tughluq founded 'the third city of Delhi', named Tughluqabad, to the east of the Qutub complex. It was a sort of fortified township built on a hill top and protected by its own double or triple defensive walls. Quadrangular in shape, measuring about 2,000 metres on each side, and overlooking the entire Yamuna belt because of its elevation from the ground level, the township of Tughluqabad was provided with a magnificent royal palace and numerous other public buildings all of which now lie in ruins. It has rightly been said that 'few strongholds of antiquity look more imposing in their ruins than the town of Tughluqabad'. Its sharply sloping walls, made of huge irregualr stones and having colossal circular bastions at close intervals, heavy battlements and a series of loopholes, create an impression of great strength and solidarity. 'Within its walls may now be seen ruined streets and

buildings and the traces of the royal palace once roofed with gilded tiles', and 'the golden bricks which, when the sun rose, shone so dazzlingly that no one could gaze at it steadily'.[11] The soldier sultan built his own mausoleum beneath the walls of the city with which it was connected by a causeway. The tomb, which, unlike the town, has survived in a fairly preserved state, is made of red sandstone with inlays of marble, and has an irregular pentagonal base; it is surmounted by a huge dome of marble, and the entire structure is enclosed by a battlemented sloping wall with a massive 'bastion at each corner', thus giving it the shape of a fortress.

The small fortress of Adilabad, situated in the neighbourhood of Tughluqabad, was constructed by Muhammad bin Tughluq. He founded *Jahanpanah*—'the fourth city of Delhi' in between and by linking the first and the second cities by walls of huge thickness. The entire structure now lies in ruins with the exception of *Sathpalah Band* and the *Bijai Mandal*. The sultan must have made a great contribution towards the construction of public buildings at Daulatabad in the Deccan which was made the imperial capital by him for a short while; most of his buildings have, however, disappeared because of the poor building material used in their construction. Firoze Tughluq was a builder *par excellence* who made a rich contribution towards the construction of public works, including the new towns, palaces, mosques, tombs, water reservoirs, *caravan serais*, bridges, canals, public baths, *madrasas*, shrines, charity houses, gardens and what not. He founded the cities of Fatehabad, Hissar Firoza (modern Hissar in Haryana) and Jaunpur. He built 'the fifth city of Delhi', called Firozabad, which was situated to the north of *Siri*. Therein he raised three palaces, including the one palace-fort, now called Kotla Firoze Shah, nine mosques and many public buildings to accommodate the courtiers and secretarial offices.

Third Phase: Countrywide Expansion of Indo-Islamic Architecture

The invasion of Amir Timur in 1398-99 gave a serious setback to the socio-cultural advancement of northern India, in general, and the architectural activities of the sultans of Delhi, in particular. He descended upon the country as 'a scourge of God' and wrought untold miseries upon its people. The whole of northwestern region, including Delhi and a part of the Doab, was trampled under feet by the turkish hordes and robbed of its incalculable wealth; dozens of big towns were sacked and their magnificent buildings razed to the ground. Delhi, once the metropolis of an extensive muslim empire in the subcontinent and the hub of Islamic culture and civilisation to the east of Baghdad, lay in ruins, with its debris soaked in the blood of its unfortunate citizens.[12] The Sayyads and the Lodhis, had neither the time nor resources to attend to the architectural activities. Nevertheless, Khizr Khan, the founder of the Sayyad dynasty, laid the foundation of a new township, called

Khizrabad, and his successor Mubarak Shah made a half-hearted attempt to raise yet another building complex, known after him as Mubarakabad, which is now located by the tomb of the founder. The fifteenth century is marked by the appearance of numerous tombs of artistic beauty and strength, constructed by the Sayyad and the Lodhi sultans as well as their nobility which dot the present metropolis of Delhi and constitute attractive visiting spots for the sightseers. These include, among others, the tombs of Sikander Lodhi, *Bare Khan, Chhote Khan, Bara Gumbad, Shish Gumbad, Dadi ka Gumbad, Poli ka Gumbad,* and *Moth ki Masjid.*

The Indo-Islamic architectural activity had become almost universal throughout the length and breadth of the empire during the Tughluq period. With the decline and disintegration of the sultanate, the architectural activities were also decentralised and shifted to the provincial capitals and the regional states which emerged on its ruins. It resulted in the diversification of the Indo-Islamic architecture, giving birth to a number of art styles with the manifestation of new features, distinct from those of the traditional Indo-Islamic architecture as had been patronised by the sultans of Delhi in the thirteenth and the first half of the fourteenth centuries. Among others, the centres of local or regional architectural styles included those of Bengal, Jaunpur, Malwa, Gujarat, Punjab and the Bahmani kingdom of the south whose rulers extended liberal patronage to art and architecture. Throughout this period, the hindu states including those of Mewar, Marwar and Vijayanagar, preserved and extended the ancient Indian architectural styles and forms with equally great enthusiasm.

Bengal had a strong local tradition of art and architecture in ancient times; accordingly, the muslim rulers of the province, whether independent or subordinate to the sultans of Delhi, became responsible for the emergence of remarkably original Bengali style of Indo-Islamic architecture soon after the establishment of their foothold there. It retained many popular hindu traditions 'in the structural as well as decorative fields' even in the construction of purely Islamic art forms like the *masjids* and tombs.[13] The muslim architects adopted the hindu temple style of curvilinear cornices,[14] dwarf square pillars and the carved designs, like lotus, for decoration. Paucity of stone necessitated the use of kiln-burnt bricks as the chief building material as ever before although the use of stone, where available, was also not neglected by them. The tomb and a mosque of Zafar Khan Ghazi at Tribeni (district Hooghly), which constituted the earliest architectural monument of the Indo-Islamic style in Bengal, now lie in partial ruins; these had been constructed almost exclusively from material of the hindu buildings. The *Adina Masjid*, constructed by Sikander Shah (1359-83) at Pandua (West Bengal), was said to be 'as big as the eighth century *Jam i Masjid* at Damascus', it had a vast central courtyard, measuring 397 feet by 159 feet. According to J.P. Guha,

'the central nave of its sanctuary which measured 70 feet by 34 feet, with its pointed archway, 50 feet high and 33 feet wide, and trefoil arched *mihrab* at the western side, bearing hindu designs, all point to a work of rich imagination'.[15] The *Eklakhi* tomb of Jalaluddin Muhammad Shah (1415-31) at Pandua exhibits the true character of the Bengali style of Indo-Islamic architecture. The *Dakhil Darwaza* at Gaur (West Bengal) is an imposing gateway which has been built of bricks with terracotta surface decoration. Among other extant monuments of the later Ilyas Shahi and subsequent rulers of Bengal (1442-1576) may be mentioned *Tantipara, Chamkan Darasbari, Lotan, Bara Sona, Chhota Sona* and *Qadam Rasul* mosques at Gaur and *Bagha masjid* in the Rajashahi district of modern Bangladesh.

The town of *Jaunpur* was founded by sultan Firoze Tughluq on the bank of the Gomti during his return march from the second expedition of Bengal in 1359-60 in the memory of his cousin Jauna Khan (Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq). After the sack of Delhi by Amir Timur, the Tughluq governor of Jaunpur, named Malik Sarwar, set up as a *de facto* ruler and laid the foundation of what is known to history as the Sharqi dynasty of Jaunpur (1399-1500). Sultan Ibrahim Shah (1402-36), the greatest ruler of this dynasty, was a great patron of art, architecture, education and learning. He beautified his capital by the construction of magnificent public buildings, gardens and educational institutions, as a result of which Jaunpur became a great centre of Islamic culture and learning, and earned the title of the *Shiraz of India*. It developed a new style of Indo-Islamic architecture which showed a profuse and very refreshing blending of the hindu and muslim architectural traditions. The Sharqi architects made simultaneous use of the arcuate and trabeate principles in their building structures, thus bringing about a very healthy synthesis between the two styles. The buildings of Jaunpur were noted for their beautiful arches and decorated vaults side by side with square pillars with bracket capitals, massive sloping walls and cloisters while its mosques were devoid of minarets of the traditional Islamic style. Among the extant monuments of the Sharqi dynasty may be mentioned the Atala Devi,[16] *Jhanjhiri, Khalis Mukhlis* and *Lal Darwaza*[17] mosques, all of which are eclipsed by the massive *Jami Masjid* built by Husain Shah Sharqi in about 1417 A.D. According to Fergusson's observation, the Jaunpur style could be distinguished by its use of pylon or gateway of almost Egyptian mass and outline.'[18]

The province of *Gujarat* has had a glorious tradition of indigenous architectural style long before the penetration of the muslim arms there during the rule of Alauddin Knalji in 1297. After the invasion of Amir Timur, its governor Zafar Khan, son of a local hindu convert, became independent of Delhi with the title of Sultan Muzaffar Shah in 1401. He and his successors continued to

rule over Gujarat until its annexation by Akbar in 1572. The turkish governors and, later on, the sovereign muslim rulers of Gujarat thoroughly exploited the local architectural talent and resources for the construction of palaces, forts, mosques and public buildings, thus giving birth to 'the most remarkable and the finest' among the provincial styles of Indo-Islamic architecture[19]; it carried the predominant influence of the Gujarati hindu traditions. Sultan Ahmad Shah (1411-42) laid the foundation of an entirely new capital city, named after him as Ahmadabad; it was adorned with magnificent buildings on which the hindu and muslim architects worked hand in glove with each other to produce marvellous results in the domain of a typically Gujarati art style. Among the extant monuments of this period mention may be made of the magnificent *Jama i Masjid* of Ahmadabad which has fifteen domes, each supported on eight columns, and a hall of 260 lofty pillars with richly carved galleries. The facade of the mosque with its well-proportioned parts and wide cloisters on all the four sides of the open courtyard, make it 'one of the noblest edifices' in the whole world; 'with this mosque', says Percy Brown, 'the medieval architecture reached the high water-mark of the mosque design in western India, if not in the entire country.'[20] A small but elegant tomb of Rani Sipri (Rani Sabrai; d. 1514 A.D.), with an attached lovely little mosque, has been adjudged, by far as the most beautiful monument of Ahmadabad. "East or West", writes Sir John Marshall, "it would be difficult to single out a building in which the parts are harmoniously blended or in which balance, symmetry and decorative rhythm combine to produce a more perfect effect. Its mosque is a small one, only 48 feet by 19.5 feet, but this smallness is an asset in its favour, since the delicate traceries and jewels—like carving of Gujarat, suggestive as they are of an almost feminine grace, show to less advantage in bigger and more virile structures."[21] With 'richly decorated stone-carving, low cupolas, high ornamental minarets and meticulous finishing', this queen among the architectural monuments, is the one 'which only a hindu queen could order and only hindu artists could carve;[22] it has justly been acclaimed by Fergusson as 'the most exquisite gem' of Ahmadabad.[23] Yet another production of 'rare architectural dignity' at Ahmadabad is Tin Darwaza or Triple Gateway; crowned by a well-balanced and richly decorated arch, it constituted a stately entrance to the royal building complex.

Malwa slipped out of the control of Delhi in 1398 under its erstwhile governor Dilawar Khan Ghori; his ruling house was transplanted by Mahmud Khan Khalji in 1436. The muslim rulers of Malwa who had their capital first at Dhar and then at Mandu have also left behind quite a few monuments of Indo-Islamic architecture with a local strain. Of these, the *Jam i Masjid* of Mandu completed in 1454 A.D. is a beautiful edifice, which has been built on a raised platform with 'a series of arcaded chambers' on the

sides, and three massive domes, standing on twelve pillars each, thus leaving very little open space for the congregation. The tomb of Hushang Shah (1405-35), situated at the back of the mosque, is characterised by 'the extensive use of white marble, wide expanse of its dome, and an additional terrace, with four corner cupolas between the dome and the lower square chamber'. The *Hindola Mahal*—'the swinging palace', which is T-shaped in plan, was constructed by Hushang Shah for use as 'an assembly hall and royal apartments'. In its final stage of development, the Malwa style of Indo-Islamic architecture was characterised by 'the immense love for pleasure and luxurious life' for which the rulers of Malwa, particularly, Baz Bahadur, were quite notorious. The first example of this art style is furnished by the *Jahaz Mahal* which stands between two small lakes; a double storeyed building 'with a facade of well-proportioned, tall and pointed arches', it was provided with turkish baths, pavilions, swimming pools and fountains, etc. Among other such monuments may be mentioned the palaces of Baz Bahadur and Roopmati in the vicinity of Mandu, and the water-palace of *Kaliadeh* near Ujjain which was converted into a holiday resort by the hindu rulers of Gwalior during the later period. Chanderi (now in Madhya Pradesh), which formed a part of the Malwa kingdom in the fifteenth century, has also preserved a few monuments of the bygone days, including the *Jam i Masjid*, *Shahzadi ka Rauza*, the Madrasa tomb, and the seven-storeyed *Kushak Mahal*. The last monument of the period under review at Chanderi is the lofty *Badal Mahal*, a double-storey archway.

The contributions made by the Bahmani sultans towards the development of Indo-Islamic architecture as also the growth and development of art and architecture in the hindu states of Mewar, Marwar and Vijayanagar have been dealt with in chapter eight of this volume.

Notes:

1. Refer to Volume One of this study, pp. 288-89.
2. Ziyauddin A. Desai, *Indo-Islamic Architecture*, Delhi, 1970, p. 1.
3. Refer to Volume One of this study, pp. 291-92.
4. For detai's refer to H G. Rawlinson, *India—A Short Cultural History*, ed. by C.G. Seligman, London, 1937.
5. "The forefathers of the Aryans of Iran and India belonged to the same branch of the great Aryan people so that the two groups were related by common blood and close kinship in language, religion and culture."—Refer to D.C. Sircar, *Iranians and Greeks in Ancient Punjab*, Sitaram Kohli Memorial Lectures, delivered at the Punjabi University, Patiala, 1972.
6. For details refer to Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture (Buddhist and Hindu)*, 2nd ed, Bombay, 1949; A. Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art;* London, 1921; and J. Burgess, *Ancient Monuments, Temples and Sculptures of India*, 2 vols; London, 1897.

7. Refer to H. Cousens, *A Short Account of Early Muslim Architecture*, Pelican, 1958; also, E.B. Havell, *Indian Architecture—Its Psychology, Structure and History From the First Muhammedan Invasion to the Present Day*, London, 1913.
8. Ziyauddin A. Desai, *Indo-Islamic Architecture*; *loc. cit.*
9. Gordon Hearson, *The Seven Cities of Delhi—A Description and History*, Thacker & Spink, Calcutta & Simla, 1928.
10. Popularly known as Qutub Shah or *Ush ka Pir* (Ush being a place situated near Baghdad).
11. Ibn Battuta, *Kitab ur Rehla;* Eng trs. by A. Mahdi Husain, entitled, *The Rehla of Ibn Battuta*, Baroda, 1953.
12. For details refer to *Volume One* of this study, pp. 242-47.
13. Refer to J.P. Guha, *Introducing Indian Art*; Calcutta, 1963.
14. Popularly known as the *Bengali roof*, sloping downwards towards the ends in a slight curve on the pattern of the typical bamboo roofs of the hindu buildings, so designed for the speedy dispersal of water during the rainy season.
15. Guha, Introducing Indian Art, *op. cit.*
16. built on the site of an earlier hindu temple dedicated to the worship of *Atala* goddess.
17. So called because of the colour of the main gate; it was built by Raj Bibi, a consort of sultan Mahmud Sharqi.
18. James Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, 2nd revised edition by James Burgess & Spiers, 2 vols, London, 1910, II, pp. 540-44.
19. A. Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture* (*Islamic Period*), Bombay, 1944, pp. 47-48; also E.B. Havell, *Indian Architecture*, London, 1913, pp. 51-63.
20. *ibid.*
21. John Marshall, "Monuments of Muslim India"—*Cambridge History of India*, Vol. III, London, 1928.
22. H.G. Rawlinson, *India, A Short Cultural History*, *loc. cit.*, pp. 53-64.
23. History of Indian and Eastern Architecture, *loc. cit.*

Chapter 7

Religious Reform Movements

1: Religion as a Social Force

An attempt has been made in the foregoing pages of this study to illustrate, in historic perspective and on sound academic considerations, how the era of conflict between the two socio-cultural forces, variously styled as 'hindu' and 'muslim' or 'indigenous' and 'exotic', was quickly overtaken by the forces of social stability and healthy interaction between the two in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, thus giving birth to the Indo-Muslim society. The part played by the sultans of Delhi towards the socio-cultural advancement and economic progress of their subjects has been critically examined in *chapter four*. Growth and development of education and learning, as reviewed in *chapter five* of the study, constituted the foundation on which the superstructure of the Indo-Muslim society and culture was raised by intellectual giants and patriotic scholars like Amir Khusrau, whereas, the architectural monuments of the sultans, as described in the *preceding chapter*, were a manifestation of the healthy synthesis which had started taking place between the two apparently diverse 'hindu' and 'muslim' or 'indigenous' and 'exotic' cultural traditions. Of course, religion played a predominant role in the medieval Indian society, and something concrete in this specific domain, was also needed to bridge the gulf between the two communities at the socio-cultural levels. The saints and scholars of both the communities were conscious of this fact; and, before long, there emerged from among their ranks, *bhakti* reformers and *sufi* saints, who took up the cause of socio-religious reforms and preached the gospels of Equality of all Mankind, Universal Brotherhood, and Hindu-Muslim Unity, in the local dialects and regional languages which could be easily understood by the Indian masses. Neither the Bhakti Movement nor Sufism owed their origin to Medieval India; nor did either of the two stand to propagate any extraordinary or new religious beliefs and dogmas to their followers. Instead, both of them carried on their campaigns well within the frameworks of their respective

religions, Hinduism and Islam, with the two-fold objective: (a) to curb the exploitative and superstitious elements and factors in their religions, and (b) to mould the social lives of their followers in conformity with the principles of 'equality of mankind' and 'universal brotherhood' with emphasis on *hindu-muslim unity*. It is only in this sense that the role of the *bhakti reformers* and *sufi saints* can be better understood and appreciated; that is why, the author has used the words 'Religion as a Social Force' by way of an introduction to the study of these two religious reform movements.

2: The Bhakti Movement

Genesis of the Bhakti Cult

The devotional worship of God with the ultimate object of attaining *moksha* or salvation is called *bhakti*.[1] The cult of *bhakti* is as old as the Indian religious tradition going back to the prehistoric times of the Indus Valley Civilisation and Culture. The latter provides us with the earliest evidences of the worship of *Shiva Pashupati* seated in meditation, surrounded by animals. We find mention of *bhakti* in the Vedas, Upanishads, the Epics and the Puranas. The *Vedanta*[2] or the Vedic religious philosophy, based primarily on the Upanishads, deals with the philosophical aspect of the religious beliefs and practices of the Indo-Aryans as distinct from its ritualistic and superficial forms. It attempts to resolve the mysteries of creation and explore the meaning and purpose of human life through metaphysical speculations. The Vedanta or the Upanishads'[3] which act as its feeders, do not present any single or consistent system of philosophy; they contain many a philosophic thought, opinion and metaphysical concept put forth by a galaxy of sages (*rishis*), scholars and spiritual thinkers, some of whose speculations are diametrically opposed to each other. Nevertheless, the crux of the Vedanta philosophy is the concept of the Creator and the Creation, God (*Brahman* or *Parmatman*) and Soul (*Atman*); it revolves round two basic principles—the doctrine of rebirth or transmigration of the soul, and the theory of *karma* or 'law of the deeds'. The relationship between Soul and God is like the one which exists between a part and the whole, between a drop of water and the ocean.[4] Man is mortal but the soul is immortal; being a part and parcel of God, its ultimate object is to seek reunion with the latter and become one with God. This is what is meant by salvation (variously termed as *mukti*, *moksh* or *nirvana*) or liberation from the cycle of births and rebirths.

The Vedanta suggests three ways for the attainment of salvation, referred to as *gyan-marg*, *karma-marg*, and *bhakti-marg* respectively. The *gyan marg* lays stress on the acquisition of True Knowledge or Enlightenment as a means to the attainment of *mukti; Sankhya Darshan* of Kapila recommends this method. The *karma*

marg, as recommended by Lord Krishna to his disciple Arjuna in the *Bhagwadgita*, calls for selfless or disinterested action (*karmayoga*) for this purpose, whereas, the *bhakti marg* suggests the devotional worship of God to be the easiest method to win His favours and seek reunion with Him after death. Devotional worship of God presupposes the omnipotence of the Creator, complete surrender to Him by the devotee, and the worship of God by means of noble deeds and meditation, including the chanting of His name through thought, word and deed; it tends to establish a sort of personal relationship between God and man, as between the master and the slave, husband and wife or the beloved and the lover.

Gyan-marg is the most difficult to adopt; very few sages with extraordinary Godly virtues and qualities of head and heart may retreat from this materialistic world as *sanyasis*, and be successful in acquiring True Knowledge or Enlightenment. The *karma-yoga* may be successfully adopted by some people of integrity and virtue with high moral character while performing their household duties with an attitude of absolute disinterestedness or non-attachment. The *karmayogis* attend to the worldly affairs apparently as ordinary men of the world though, in their hearts of hearts, they are far beyond the reach of any considerations of personal gain, worldly temptations and feelings of victory or defeat, pleasure or pain. They perform their *swadharma* selflessly and fearlessly without any attachment to men, matters and things. An ideal example may be cited of Arjuna who performed his duty as a perfect *karmayogi* at Kurukshetra in the great battle of Mahabharata.[5]

The cult of *bhakti* took its birth in the form of a movement in the Tamil country sometime in the sixth century as a reaction against the growing tide of Buddhism and Jainism. It flourished in south India for about three centuries through its two well-defined wings, Saivism and Vaisnavism. The exponents of Siva worship were called collectively as Nayanars (viz; the leaders) while those of Vishnu became known as *Alvars*.[6]

Sankaracharya (788-820 A.D.)

Sankaracharya, a Nambudiri brahmin from the Malabar and originally a worshipper of Siva, gave an entirely new turn to the hindu revival movement by providing it with a solid philosophical background through the reinterpretation of ancient Indian scriptures, particularly the Upanishads. Sankara advocated the philosophy of *Advaita*—'the Monism of the Vedanta' by giving a brilliant exposition to the entire range of the Vedic religious and spiritual thought. Having lost his father in his childhood, Sankara (it was his assumed name) became a *sanyasi* (an ascetic) while in his teens and began to roam about in search of true knowledge and wisdom. A genius by birth and intensely religious by outlook and social heritage, Sankara received instruction in religious scriptures and philosophic speculations at Kashi (mod. Varanasi); one of his teachers was said to be

Govinda *Yogi*. Sankaracharya started a vigorous campaign for the revival of Hinduism as a living and progressive faith, based on the solid foundations of the Vedic philosophy and ancient Indian cultural traditions. In order to combat Buddhism and Jainism, he reorganised the ascetic order of *sanyasis* on the pattern of the Buddhist Sangha and launched an incessant campaign for the propagation and popularisation of Hinduism. He founded a number of *mathas* (monasteries) in different parts of India to highlight the cultural unity of India; they included among others, the *mathas* of Jagannatha Puri in the east, Sringeri in the south, Dwaraka in the west and Badrinatha in the north. Sankaracharya breathed his last at Kedarnath at the young age of thirty-two but, before his death, his name had already become a household word throughout the length and breadth of the country. As a result of the vigorous and well-organised campaign launched by him, millions of dissenters from Hinduism again returned to its fold. Sankaracharya has rightly been called the saviour of modern Hinduism; he was also the founding father of the Bhakti Movement which found its way into the medieval period. Nevertheless, he laid stress on *gyan* or *jnana*—'the true knowledge' as a means to the attainment of salvation. It was good as an ideal but not practicable for an average man; that is why, the succeeding preachers of the Vedanta philosophy substituted it by the *bhakti marg* 'to attract popular mind' and make Hinduism a more dynamic force.[7]

Bhakti Cult as a Reformative Movement

The cult of *bhakti*, to begin with, had essentially a religious fervour; it was because the main theme of the teachings of its exponents was faith in One God and devotion to Him through either of the three suggested paths for the attainment of salvation; it was actually named as Ekantika Dharma—'the religion of single-mindedness' for a long time. Sankaracharya gave it the form of a cultural movement which stood for the revival and glorification of the ancient Indian cultural traditions. The cult of *bhakti* assumed the form of a reformative movement in the medieval period when a number of holy men and scholar saints took up the cause of socio-religious reforms among the people, in quick succession, in various parts of the country.

The causes of the rapid spread of the Bhakti Movement and its popularity in medieval India are not far to seek. Degeneration of Hindu religion and social structure were obviously the primary causes. By the efforts of Sankaracharya and others, Buddhism and Jainism received a setback and supremacy of the Brahmanic faith was restored. It implied *ipso facto*, the dominance of the priestly class among the brahmins over the entire religious organisation of the hindus. As religion played the premier role in all walks of their life, the supremacy of brahmins in the socio-cultural, political and even econonic fields was complete. Their hold over the hindu society was further strengthened during the rajput period. Many

of the rajput chiefs and their nobility, particularly the erstwhile foreign immigrants and aborigines, owed their recognition as *rajputras* or *kshatriyas* to the magnanimity of the brahmin priests who granted them a superior social status among the people. As the readers are aware,[8] the caste system had already disrupted the social unity of the hindus. It had been accorded religious sanction particularly since the days of Manu. In the ninth and tenth centuries, the brahmins came forward as caste-makers in a big way when they began to confer high castes on the militant Indianised foreigners. It further strengthened their hold over the people as their socio-cultural leaders. Subsequently, the defeat of the rajputs at the hands of the turkish invaders and the decline of their power in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, actually left the brahmins as the only saviours of the ancient Indian religion and culture. They rendered a yeoman's service to Hinduism in this regard but, while doing so, badly crippled the other two high castes—*kshatriyas* and *vaisyas*. Alberuni tells us that the *vaisyas* were treated just like *sudras* in the beginning of the eleventh century. R. C. Dutt opines that the *kshatriyas* still held their own as long as India was a free country, but lost their glory and independence after the twelfth century. And then the bold myth was proclaimed that the *kshatriyas* too as a caste had, like the *vaisyas*, ceased to exist.'[9] Obviously, such myths were floated by the brahmins deliberately to frighten the hindu masses into abject submission so that they could exploit their services as best as they could. The caste system was made still more rigid and the evil of untouchability practised with a vengeance. The *sudras* constituted the bulk of the society. Alberuni lists eight *antyaja* castes below the status of the *sudras*; they were 'the weaver, the shoemaker, the juggler, the basket-maker, the sailor, the fisherman, the hunter of wild animals, and the blacksmith'. All those who did not fit into any of the above-mentioned castes were simply classed as the outcastes or the *chandalas*.[10] Needless to say the high-caste people exploited the low castes and heaped all sorts of insults upon them. Even the states discriminated between the citizens on the basis of caste. Alberuni informs us that the punishment for a *brahmin* who murdered a man of another caste was 'expiation, consisting of fasting, prayers and almsgiving'; if he killed another *brahmin*, 'the punishment was banishment and confiscation of property'. In no case was a *brahmin* offender punished with death which was a common penalty imposed upon the *sudras* and the outcastes even in cases involving theft. In matters of taxation also the *brahmins* enjoyed the same indulgence as in punishment for offences; they were exempt from all taxes.

The actual services rendered by the brahmin priests in return for the above-mentioned privileges enjoyed by them, were rather of negative character. Alberuni, who had carefully studied hindu religious philosophy and institutions, found no difficulty in marking

out the three deities of the hindu Trinity and the true monistic philosophy of the Upanishads that lay behind it. "The existence of God", he writes, "they (the hindus) consider as real existence, because everything that exists through Him". Alberuni is, however, shocked to observe that 'this noble faith' had become 'the exclusive property of the educated few' and that 'the common people' were referred to idols and temples, to unmeaning rites and unhealthy restrictions'. In disgust, he asks the question, "Why should the people be led on poison in a land where the nectar stream of an ancient and life-giving religion flows perennial?"[11] Once the simple and straightforward Vedic religion had given place to orthodox beliefs, complex rites and rituals, superstitions, hoaxes and affection primarily because of the gross negligence and selfishness of the brahmin priests. They observed studied silence over the degenerating religious practices and deliberately distorted or misinterpreted the old religious scriptures with the object of fleecing the devotees and befooling the poor and innocent people. By the beginning of the fifteenth century, according to an observation, 'the springs of religion had been choked up by the weeds of unmeaning ceremonials, debasing superstitions, the selfishness of the priests and the indifference of the people. Form had supplanted the reality, and the highly spiritual character of Hinduism had been buried under the ostentatious paraphernalia of sects.'[12] The hindu society as a whole was diseased. The social atmosphere was so sickening that it depressed and demoralised even the most intelligent and well-to-do householders. It so appeared that the whole society had been held to ransom by the self-seeking and fanatical priests. Such a sorry state of affairs could not go unchallenged for a long time. Slowly and steadily, the lower castes began to show signs of discontent against the exploitative tendencies of the higher castes. It acted as an eye-opener to some educated persons, religious-minded saints and critics belonging to various sections of the society who, one after another, jumped into the field to stem the rot before it was too late. Most of them were either ascetics, by conviction without any worldly encumbrances, or had to adopt an ascetic life, may be for a short while to fight for socio-religious reforms as missionaries. They raised their voice of protest against the falsehood that prevailed in the name of Hindu religion, denounced caste system, and pointed an accusing finger towards the brahmin priests who were primarily responsible for all that muddle. As the roots of all the social and religious evils lay in their religious order, the work of reforms could also be taken up effectively on the religious plane. Hence it was that all those wise men, who were eager to restore the health of the sick hindu society, had to assume the robes of religious preachers and ascetics for the success of their mission. They boldly demanded reforms in the society and at the same time set an example through their own high moral character and ideal way of living for emulation by their followers. These ascetics and scholar saints devoted their

lives in the service of their fellow-brethren, and the success of each in his mission was in direct proportion to the respect that he commanded from his followers as their *guru* or religious teacher. Through their untiring efforts, the cult of *bhakti* was transformed into a forceful reform movement which engulfed the whole of the country.

The second major factor which gave an impetus to the Bhakti Movement was the advent of Islam and the establishment of muslim rule in India. Islam was opposed to Hinduism in more respects than one; being exotic in character, it posed a serious danger to the ancient Indian socio-cultural traditions. The muslim preachers as well as their rulers were equally pledged to convert the *dar ul harb* of India into *dar ul Islam* by all means. Therefore, the establishment of the muslim rule put the very existence of Hinduism and hindu social order in jeopardy. At this critical moment, some of the intelligent and religious-minded leaders, belonging to all castes and social strata of the hindus, realised that unless radical reforms were brought about in their religious and social set up they would be knocked out by Islam before long. This apprehension added an element of urgency to the reform movement. Moreover, Islam had already earned a worldwide reputation for its cardinal principles regarding its religious philosophy and social organisation. Its bold and direct approach to the concept of One God, opposition to idol-worship, equality of all (the *faithful*, at least) were bound to attract the oppressed and downtrodden hindu masses. Hence, one of the objectives of the *bhakti* reformers was to halt conversions to Islam by setting their own house in order; they thus used the *bhakti* movement as a defensive weapon to the rising tide of Islam.

According to some critics, the *bhakti* movement was based on an attitude of escapism from the bitter realities of life. They hold that, with the establishment of the muslim rule, the hindus not only lost their political independence but also suffered from numerous political, religious and economic disabilities. They were classed as *zimmis* and deprived of full-fledged citizenship of the state. There is some force in the argument that as they 'could not pursue careers of material, political and cultural advancement under the stiffling and intolerant alien rule of the medieval sultans'[13] they sought a solace in *bhakti*; following the dictum, 'what cannot be cured must be endured', they were advised by their preceptors to feel contented with whatever they had.

Impact of Sufism on the Bhakti Movement

In spite of its monistic philosophy and the revolutionary principles of social equality and brotherhood, Islam did not become popular as a revolutionary creed in India. Unfortunately it was because of the historic factors which led to the establishment of

the muslim rule in the country. The destruction and devastation wrought by the marauders of Mahmud of Ghazni in the name of Islam did an incalculable harm to their revolutionary creed, and the humiliation suffered by the hinduṣ at the hands of the invaders was remembered long by them with bitterness. The policy of persecution as adopted by the sultans of Delhi towards their hindu subjects in the thirteenth century further added to their hatred towards Islam. Therefore, in spite of the discrimination and exploitation suffered by the hindu masses at the hands of their own high-caste people, Islam was never treated as an alternative to or welcome substitute for Hinduism even by the lowest of the lowly. The credit for the pacification of their injured sentiments towards Islam and muslims goes primarily to the muslim mystics or *sufi* saints. It were they who initiated the forces for bringing about reconciliation between the hindus and muslims. The *bhakti* reformers reciprocated the noble gesture of the *sufis* and were influenced by them in adopting the principles of universal brotherhood and hindu-muslim unity, particularly in the sixteenth century. Thereafter, the *bhakti* reformers and the *sufi* saints moved hand in glove with each other for the establishment of harmonious relationships between the two communities. This, however, does not confirm the hypothesis as erroneously put forth by some of the modern writers that the Bhakti Movement was largely an outcome of the positive Islamic impact on the Indian society.

Important Teachings of the Bhakti Reformers

Each of the *bhakti* reformers carried on his missionary work in his own original or individualistic style. Very often, his field of work or the circle of devotees was also confined to certain regions or parts of the country. Therefore, it is not surprising to find that the teachings of the *bhakti* reformers sometimes showed differences in the contents and the methods of approach adopted by them for the eradication of the socio-religious evils. Nevertheless, it is not difficult to draw a fairly comprehensive list of their general teachings which may be considered under two headings, the positive teachings and the negative ones.

The positive teachings of the *bhakti* reformers revolved round the two cardinal principles: (a) unflinching faith in the omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient One God, and (b) devotional worship of God for the attainment of salvation. The concept of salvation, which was, in turn, based on the two fundamental doctrines of *rebirth* or transmigration of soul and *karma*, was taken for granted. In the third place, all the *bhakti* reformers laid stress on the importance of a *guru* or the spiritual guide who could help the devotees in the attainment of their objectives. Only a true teacher who had himself risen above the personal vices and worldly temptations, and experienced the divine knowledge in the path of the *bhakti* marg could impart spiritual instruction to his

followers and lead them from darkness to light. The adoption of a living *guru*, a person of flesh and blood, was thus considered indispensable as a means towards the attainment of salvation. Many of the prominent preachers themselves assumed the role of *gurus* and were recognised as such by their devotees. Fourthly, moral education was an essential part of the teachings of the *bhakti* reformers; high moral character and the virtuous living were the prerequisites of those who wanted to receive baptism from the *guru*. Complete self-surrender or total dedication to God was considered indispensable for the attainment of spiritual knowledge and divine bliss. Every devotee was expected to suppress his ego, personal desires, sensuous pleasures and other worldly temptations, and devote himself to the worship of God in thought, word and deed. Fifthly, the *bhakti* reformers believed in the equality of all mankind and advocated the development of fellow-feeling among the people. As all the human beings were the children of the same Almighty Father, everyone should love the other irrespective of his caste, colour and creed. Love of mankind was the true devotion to God.

The negative teachings of the *bhakti* reformers were as important as the positive ones. Being revolutionary reformers, most of them campaigned vigorously against the deep-rooted socio-religious evils and met with tough opposition from the vested interests who did not see eye to eye with them. They refused to accept the supremacy of the *brahmin* priests who considered themselves to be the custodians of all religious knowledge and institutions, and who were primarily responsible for the decline and degeneration of the hindu society. Some of the reformers challenged the sanctity of ancient Indian scriptures and Sanskrit language which had become unintelligible to the masses. All of them preached in the local dialects and spoken languages of the people which could be easily understood by them. This helped in the rapid spread of the Bhakti Movement throughout the length and breadth of the country. The *bhakti* reformers condemned idol-worship, superstitious beliefs and practices and meaningless rituals, including the conduct of *yajnas* and pilgrimages to the holy places of worship. They led a vigorous attack on the tantric rites and other hoaxes played upon the poor and ignorant masses by the self-seeking and crafty priests. The *bhakti* reformers did not wrangle over the metaphysical abstractions or delve deep into the philosophical matters. Instead, they were essentially eclectic and broadminded in their views and outlook. They believed in the equality of all human beings and fostered fellow-feeling among untouchability. Many of the reformers themselves belonged to the lower castes and their teachings were meant both for the high-castes and low, rich and poor, educated and uneducated. Their message had a popular appeal.

Prominent Bhakti Reformers

The second great exponent of the Bhakti Movement, after Sankaracharya, was *Ramanuja* (1017-1137) who hailed from modern Andhra Pradesh; some of the writers assign him the first position as the founding father of the movement because, strictly speaking, it was he who showed preference to *bhakti* over *gyan* as the principal means of attaining salvation. A *vaisnava* by faith, Ramanuja received training in the Vedanta from his teacher Yadava Prakasa of Kanchipuram who belonged to the school of Sankaracharya. Ramanuja differed with some of the philosophic aspects of Sankara's theory such as the concepts universe being an illusion (*maya*), and absolute monism, as deduced by him from the Upanishads. Ramanuja redefined the Vedanta philosophy by laying greater stress on devotional worship to a personal God who constituted the Supreme Reality. He emphasised that God was the Supreme Creator, Destroyer and Preserver of the universe, and the soul, though a part and parcel of the same divine force, was yet distinct from it; in his words, 'the soul, though of the same substance as God's and emitted from Him rather than created, can obtain bliss not in absorption but in existence near Him.'[14] In other words, Ramanuja suggested the existence of dualism within the monistic philosophy of the Vedanta. A great scholar and widely travelled man, Ramanuja wrote a number of books and treatises on the *bhakti* cult, including *Vedanta Sanghmaha*, and the commentaries on *Brahmasutras* and the *Bhagwadgita*. Unlike Sankaracharya, Ramanuja was very liberal in his social outlook, and he broke the caste barriers in his teachings. He attained national fame as a *bhakti* reformer in his lifetime and made more than 10,000 disciples through his personal contact with them before his death at the ripe old age of 120.

Nimbarkara, a young contemporary of Ramanuja from the south, established his *ashram* at Braja, near Mathura and preached the gospel of dedication to God, personified by Krishna and Radha; his cult proved very popular with the commonfolk in the Gangetic Valley. Madhvacharya, a vaisnavite from south India, who flourished in the thirteenth century, wrote as many as thirty-seven works on vaisnavism, especially dealing with the cult of *bhakti* based on the concept of dualism as distinct from the monistic philosophy of Sankaracharya. According to Madhvacharya, the universe could be divided into two parts—*swatantra* or 'independent being' and *aswatantra* or 'the dependent being'; the former included the omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient God alone while the latter comprised matter and the souls. Nevertheless, these intricate matters of philosophic speculations were not the concern of his disciples who aspired to attain salvation through devotional worship of God under his stewardship.

The first prominent preacher of the Bhakti Movement, born and bred in northern India, was Ramananda; with him the centre of gravity of the movement shifted from the south to the Gangetic

valley. A *brahmin* of the Kanyakubja parents of Prayag, Ramananda received his higher education in Hindu religious philosophy at Varanasi and joined the school of Ramanuja as a preacher. Soon afterwards, he set up his own independent sect based on the doctrine of devotional worship to Rama and Sita. He vehemently opposed the supremacy of *brahmins* (his own kinsmen) to be the sole custodians of Hindu religion and made disciples from among the *sudras* and the low castes although he could not do away with the caste prejudices altogether. It was Ramananda who was the celebrated author of a very popular saying which runs as follows:

Zat paat puchhe na koe, Har ko bhaje so Har ka hoe.

"None should ask a man his caste; if one is devoted to God, one is owned by God and becomes one with Him."

Ramananda adopted Hindi, then the spoken language of the people in the Gangetic valley, as his medium of expression for the spread of the Bhakti Movement, and thus rendered a great service to the development of that language. He was the first *bhakti* reformer to throw open the gates of divine worship to the women and made disciples from among them. Twelve of his disciples rose into prominence after his death and carried his message from door to door, they included among others, Dhana (a Jat), Sena (a barber), Rai Das (a cobbler) and two women named Padmavati and Surasari.

Kabir (c. 1440-1510), the most popular of all the disciples of Ramananda, occupies a place of pride in the annals of the Bhakti Movement in northern India. It is said that he was the son of a hindu widow who, 'to hide her shame, left him immediately after his birth, by the side of a water-tank in Benaras. He was picked up by a muslim weaver named Niru who brought him up as his own son. Kabir married and adopted the profession of his Godfather but, being a man of sober and serious mood, he spent most of his time in solitude and meditation. He was initiated into the *bhakti* cult by Ramananda.

The entry of Kabir into the fold of the Bhakti Movement proved most fruitful in bringing about reconciliation between the hindus and muslims. With filial attachment to both the religious communities, Kabir was free from religious prejudice against either. He rubbed shoulders with *bhakti* reformers as well as the *sufi* saints. Though intensely religious in outlook, he was not a slave of either Hinduism or Islam. He was a man of absolutely independent thoughts and boldly criticised the evils of both the religions. Kabir addressed mixed gatherings, consisting of hindus and muslims and made disciples from both. He denounced the *brahmins* and the *mullas* alike to be the sole custodians of their religious orders and took them to task for their orthodox and exploitative attitude. He refused to accept the sanctity of Vedas as well as Quran to be 'the revealed scriptures'.

Kabir believed in the Oneness of God, irrespective of the names by which the human beings addressed Him. He had full faith in the hindu doctrines of rebirth and *karma* and stood for purity of life, complete self-surrender to God and His devotional worship for the attainment of *mukti*. Kabir vehemently opposed the idol-worship, caste system and untouchability as practised by the hindus and simultaneously condemned the orthodoxy and the meaningless rituals of the muslims. He exposed the futility of offering five daily prayers in the mosque without the purity of heart and sincere dedication to God. Kabir laid stress on religious toleration and taught a lesson of brotherhood to hindus and muslims.[15] He was one of the most outstanding *bhakti* reformers who did their best to bring the hindus and muslims close to each other in all walks of life. Kabir raised his voice against the custom of *sati* and child-marriage, the two evils which were purely social in character. Kabir was not in favour of renouncing the world and going to forests or hills in search of true knowledge or salvation; instead, he advised his followers to earn their livelihood by the sweat of their brow and perform all the duties as householders while leading an honest, noble and dedicated life. Kabir's teachings were in perfect harmony with the social and religious needs of the times; he identified himself completely with the concept of an integrated Indian society and won the hearts of millions. His *dohas* and popular sayings of revolutionary social import are widely known and have become a part and parcel of the medieval Indian cultural heritage. After his death, the followers of Kabir, both hindus and muslims, became known as *Kabirpanthis*. The devotees as well as the priesthood of the *Kabirpanth* retain their distinct identity up till this day.

Guru Nanak (1469-1538), a young contemporary of Kabir, who took up the cause of socio-religious reforms in the Punjab, proved to be the most celebrated of all the *bhakti* reformers of medieval India. His teachings were identical with those of Kabir *albeit* Nanak was more revolutionary than the latter in his line of approach, and, in the long run, his efforts proved much more fruitful than those of all the other *bhakti* reformers. Born at Talwandi, modern Nankana Sahib (Pakistan) in 1469 of the Mehta Khatri (old Kshatriya) parents—Kalu Ram and Tripta Devi, Nanak grew up to be a man of contemplative nature, free from all the worldly temptations and common vices of the age. Married to Sulakhani, daughter of Moolraj Khatri of Batala, he fathered two sons, Sri Chand and Lakshmi Chand, and was employed in the state granary at Sultanpur Lodhi in 1594 when he received enlightenment. Nanak turned a *sanyasi*, though temporarily, and initiated the Bhakti Movement in northwestern India. In five rounds of travels, called *udasis*, covering a period of more than thirty years, Guru Nanak carried the message of divine worship to every nook and corner of the country besides Ceylon and the muslim places

of pilgrimage at Mecca and Medina. His teachings were in conformity with all the positive tenets of the Bhakti Movement as mentioned above, with the additional credit that, like Kabir, he also advocated householders' life for his devotees; this revolutionary concept was taken by him to the logical conclusion when he emphasised that it was possible and also desirable for the men of God, on their way to the attainment of salvation, to live as honest breadearners and householders just as a lotus flower survives with untainted character in the midst of the muddy water. Towards the fag-end of his life he set up his *dehra* (akin to the *mathas* of Sankaracharya or *khanqahs* of the *sufi* saints) at Kartarpur on the bank of the Ravi and allowed his family to rejoin him; he took up to plough to set the example of an ideal householder. Guru Nanak adopted 'universal brotherhood', a concept of the *sufi* saints, to be his own slogan and championed the cause of hindu-muslim unity. He introduced community lunch (*langar*) at his *dehra* as a practical step to eradicate the evils of caste discrimination and untouchability from among his followers. As a crowning victory to the mission of Guru Nanak may be mentioned the institution of *guru-ship* envisaged by him for the continuous propagation of his teachings; during his lifetime he appointed, on spiritual merit, one of his disciples; Bhai Lehna (Angad), in preference to his own sons, as his successor. From 1538 to 1708 A.D.; as many as nine divines adorned 'the spiritual throne' of Guru Nanak. This revolutionary step led to the birth of Sikhism as a separate religion and the ultimate transformation of Sikhs into the soldier-saints.

The Bhakti Movement ran its full course in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and its echoes were heard right upto the middle of the seventeenth century. Among the other *bhakti* reformers, mention may be made of Vallabhacharya, born in a Telugu brahmin family of south India in 1479, who set up his *ashram* at Benaras and spread the Krishna cult in the Gangetic valley. Mira Bai (1498-1546) was the most notable of all the *bhakti* reformers from among the women. A rajput princess of Merta,[16] she was married to Rana Sanga's eldest son and heir-apparent prince Bhojraja in 1516 A.D. The latter died a premature death in the lifetime of his father and Mira Bai became a widow. To add to her miseries, her father lost his life in the historic battle of Khanua (or Khanwa) in 1527 while fighting on behalf of Rana Sanga, and the latter breathed his last a broken-hearted man soon afterwards. Unable to bear the strain of the miserable, worldly life, Mira turned an ascetic and adopted the *bhakti* cult. She preached the worship of God in the name of Krishna. A scholar of Hindi and Sanskrit, she was a born poet whose devotional songs and lyrics constitute a rich cultural heritage of the sixteenth century India; these earned her the title of 'the goddess of Gita style of poetry'. The concluding years of her life were spent at Dvarka; her entry into the Bhakti Movement carried the message of divine worship to almost every hindu household.

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (1486-1533), born of a *brahmin* family from Nadia, was the most famous *bhakti* reformer in Bengal. He became an ascetic at the age of twenty-five and adopted the Krishna cult. He stayed at Mathura and Vrindabana for many years and attracted lakhs of devotees. Deadly opposed to caste system and untouchability, Chaitanya was 'the very image of love' whose heart 'melted with pity' to observe the sufferings of the poor and the down-trodden. He was very popular in Bengal; so much so that some of his devotees declared him to be the incarnation of Lord Vishnu or Krishna himself.[17]

The credit for bringing about socio-religious revolution in Maharashtra goes to the Bhakti Movement led by Nam Dev, Tuka Ram, and Ram Das. Nam Dev (1270-1350), a tailor by professional caste, rose to be the first prominent *bhakti* reformer in Maharashtra. He boldly challenged the supremacy of *brahmin* priests in Hindu religion, opposed idol worship and caste system and created an atmosphere of mutual love and fellow-feeling among the marathas. Nam Dev made disciples from all castes and classes. His teachings were in conformity with most of the positive and negative tenets of the Bhakti Movement as explained earlier, he advocated devotional worship of God by the name of Hari. Tuka Ram (1601-1649), who flourished in Maharashtra in the first half of the seventeenth century, was a *sudra* by birth. He took up to asceticism while in his teens and led a life of piety and service. He struck a serious blow at the caste structure and helped the people in building a homogeneous society in Maharashtra. Tuka Ram also worked for the hindu-muslim unity and earned the gratitude of Shivaji, the rising star of Maharashtra. Swami Ram Das (1608-1681) was the revered teacher of Shivaji who provided a moral and spiritual background to the rising power of the marathas in the seventeenth century; he inculcated the spirit of nationalism among them. Shivaji as well as his mother Jijabai were both the disciples of Swami Ram Das whose cult of *Parmartha* and the general philosophy of life finds mention in his own monumental work, entitled *Dasabodha.*

Effects of the Bhakti Movement

The cult of *bhakti* assumed the form of a widespread mass movement towards the close of the fourteenth century when the sultanate of Delhi was on the way out. It was essentially an indigenous movement which involved all sections and castes of the hindus. It did not owe its origin or popularity to Islam although it was influenced to some extent by the mystic philosophy of the *sufis.* The Bhakti Movement achieved its declared objectives to a considerable extent. It rejuvenated Hinduism by striking a serious blow at the predominance of the *brahmin* priesthood in the society; the ground lost by the *brahmins* in the field of Hindu religion could

never be regained by them thereafter. It restored the confidence of the masses in their religious and socio-cultural heritage and stopped conversions to Islam on a large scale. The citadel of caste system could not be broken *albeit* its evil effects were minimised by the development of harmonious relationships and free social intercourse between the high-caste and low-caste hindus. The numerous social evils from which the hindus suffered could not be eradicated altogeth er, nevertheless, when thoroughly exposed and condemned, they tended to subside and take the hind seat in the moral conscience of the people. The Bhakti Movement laid stress on the finer values of life and thereby improved the general moral tone of the society as a whole. The Bhakti Movement marked the end of an era of oppression of the hindus under the muslim rulers because it gave them moral courage to face the hardships with contentment and cheerfulness. The *bhakti* reformers and the *sufi* saints, individually as well as collectively, helped in the creation of an atmosphere of brotherhood and fellow-feelings between the hindus and muslims and strengthened the hands of the Mughal Emperors in adopting a policy of complete religious toleration; the Bhakti Movement paved the way for the transformation of 'a muslim rule' to a national government' under Akbar the Great. The movement gave an impetus to the forces of national integration and synthesis between the so-called hindu and muslim cultures or the indigenous and exotic cultural traditions.

Some of the side-effects or after-effects of the Bhakti Movement are also noteworthy. Much of the credit for the development of vernacular languages, including Tamil, Telugu, Hindi, Punjabi, Bengali and Marathi goes to the *bhakti* reformers who carried on their campaign in the local dialects and spoken languages of the people. The theme of *bhakti* enriched the literary stock of these languages too because it provided a new line of thought and expression to the Indian scholars who were otherwise not involved in the movement as preachers. For instance, the two notable scholar-saints, Sur Das and Tulsi Das made an invaluable contribution towards the enrichment of Hindi literature in the second half of the sixteenth and first quarter of the seventeenth century, the detailed account of which has been given at an appropriate place in this study. The Bhakti Movement gave an impetus to the rise of the marathas under the leadership of Shivaji. And last but not least, the birth of Sikhism in the Punjab was the direct outcome of the Bhakti Movement which had been launched in the Punjab by Guru Nanak in 1594 A.D.

3: Sufism in India

Sufism — Its Birth and Development

Mysticism constitutes but an indispensable part of every religion in the world; with the natural religions, based on the evolution

of human culture and thought, such as Hinduism, it began with the beginning, whereas, in the case of created religions, such as Christianity and Islam, it emerged as a schism against the institutionalised or dogmatic creeds. The Islamic mysticism, known as *Tasawwuf* or *Sufism*, was as old as Islam itself; it was, no doubt, 'born in the bosom of Islam'.[18] It is said that during the very lifetime of Hazarat Muhammad there were some men of virtue and of retiring nature who embraced Islam with pleasure but showed laxity in the observation of its ritualistic or dogmatic aspects. Such liberal-minded men of God drew their inspiration from the Quran and the life of the Prophet but instead of parading about their religious orthodoxy, they laid greater stress 'on the purification of one's innerself in order to attain lasting spiritual bliss'.[19] The dawn of consciousness about the existence of one Supreme Power, the Almighty Creator, called Allah in Islam, was enough to enchant the minds of the virtuous to seek personal communion with Him through self-surrender, meditation and total dedication to the service of mankind, like the Indian mystics or Bhakti reformers. Sufism had no creed or dogma other than that of Islam and, for a long time, it had no organisation or monastic order. It is said that it assumed the form of a regular movement in Persia in the ninth century as a reaction against the rigid formalism of Islam. It received a theosophical basis during the age the Abbasid Caliphs of Baghdad and the *sufi* saints drew freely from the mystic concepts of other peoples and religions, including Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. Tara Chand characterises Sufism as 'a complex phenomenon; comparable to a stream which gathers volume by the joining of tributaries from many lands'.[20] Mysticism was looked upon with disfavour by the muslim fundamentalists, both Sunnis and Shias; as a result, the *sufis* were sometimes persecuted and some of them were actually beheaded on charge of apostasy from Islam. The credit for bringing about reconciliation between orthodox Islam and sufism goes to Al Ghazali (c. 1057-1112 A.D.), an Arab philosopher. He provided a metaphysical basis to mysticism as a part and parcel of the Islamic theology.

Various attempts have been made to define the term *sufi* which came to be employed sometime in the ninth century for those of the men of piety and mystics among the muslims who, unmindful of the formalism and social taboos of the materialistic world 'adored God above all things' and who were 'so much absorbed' in their meditation to God that even 'a moment's diversion from the thought of the Absolute was unbearable to them'. According to some, the term *sufi* was derived from *safa* (pure) because of the purity of their hearts, purity of their thoughts and the nobility of their actions. Others derive the term from *saff* (line, queue) and hold that the *sufis* were so called because they were in the forefront of the line or queue before God 'through the elevation of their desires towards Him and the turning of their hearts unto Him'.

According to a third definition, the term *sufi* has been derived from the word *suffa* (a bench) as the virtuous character and qualities of these saints were similar to those of *Ashab al Suff*—or 'People of the Bench" who were attached to the Prophet; they were called his *Companions* (*Sahaba*) and they lived 'austerely puritan lives'. The term *sufi* also bears resemblance with the word *suf* or coarse wool, suggesting thereby that the *sufis* might have been so called because of their habit of wearing a woollen blanket or a loose all-purpose sheet of cloth. All these derivatives have been beautifully summed up in a definition by *Sheikh al Islam* Zakariyah Ansari as follows:

> "Sufism teaches how to purify one's self, improve one's morals and build up one's inner and outer life in order to attain perpetual bliss. Its subject-matter is the purification of the soul and its end or aim is the attainment of eternal felicity and blessedness."[21]

It is now generally held that the *sufis* constituted an important segment of the muslim society from its very inception; they were 'devout muslims who moved within the limits of *shara* and believed it as the true way to salvation'. According to an observation, 'the orthodox muslims depend upon external conduct while the *sufis* seek inner purity. The orthodox believe in blind obedience to, or observance of religious rituals while the *sufis* think love to be the only means of reaching God'. [22]

The *sufis* were the peaceful emissaries of Islam. They dedicated their lives to the service of mankind and the spread of the Islamic faith. The propagation of Islam was regarded by them to be the greatest and the most meritorious service to be rendered to the people; to lead them from darkness to light and to convert the *dar ul harab* (the land of darkness) into *dar ul Islam* or the Land of Islam' was the highest mission of their lives. Incidentally the same was said to be the declared objective of the fanatical mullas and war-mongers like Mahmud of Ghazni with the difference that whereas the *sufi* saints laid stress on the nobility of the means for the attainment of a noble object, the others were unscrupulous about the choice of the means. The *sufis* migrated to the far-off countries and lived in the midst of the non-muslims, called *kafirs*, where they carried on the work of proselytisation through peaceful means. Consciously or unconsciously they also played a role similar to the one played by the Christian missionaries in the wake of the establishment of European colonialism in Asia and Africa. Sometimes they formed the advance-guard of the armies of Islam and paved the way for the conquest of new territories. More often, they carried on the work of consolidation of the Islamic faith among the conquered people by the application of pacific and humanitarian means.

Sufis in India

The advent of *sufis* to India dates back to the arab conquest of Sind. The arabs were successfully contained in Sind and Multan by the heroic resistance put up by the rajput chiefs of northern, central and western India, individually or collectively, for mtore than three hundred years *albeit* there are reasons to believe hat some of the *sufi* saints might have penetrated into different parts of the country during this very period. After the establishment of the muslim rule in northern India, the *sufis*, from the muslim countries of central Asia, began to migrate to this country in large numbers, obviously to reap the harvest of military conquest by gaining converts to Islam from among the vanquished. They moved about in the robes and style of the Indian *sadhus* and established their hermitages at a number of places. They set up their abode in the residential quarters or colonies of the low castes on the periphery of the hindu towns. Their first object was to win their love and confidence and reconcile them to the alien rule. Secondly, they persuaded them to embrace Islam on merit. The sultanate of Delhi was confined to only a part of India for most of the time but the *sufis* spread themselves throughout the country and carried on peaceful propagation of Islam. It bespeaks of the liberal-mindedness and magnanimity of the hindu rulers who permitted the *sufis* to make converts from among their subjects in spite of their deadly political conflict with the turko-afghan rulers of Delhi.

Main Teachings of the Sufis

Sufism was based on the monistic philosophy which is the first fundamental principle of Islam. Nevertheless, the *sufis*, like the Indian mystics or exponents of the *bhakti* cult, adopted their own line of thought and philosophic speculations in visualising the Absolute Reality or the Supreme Creator and the relationship between Him and His creation. In this respect, they, sometimes showed considerable difference of opinion with the fundamentalists among the muslim theologians. Just like the *bhakti* reformers, the *sufis* also differed with one another in many respects as regards their methods of teaching. That is why, in the final phase of its development, Sufism came to be organised into a number of *silsilahs* or orders, the founder of each of which was said to have made some special contribution or given an individualistic touch of the mystic philosophy or the organisational set up of his disciples. Of course, it may be worthwhile to enumerate the salient principles of sufism with special reference to the main teachings of the Indian *sufis*.

The monistic philosophy of Sufism was based on the theory of *wahdat ul wajud* or 'the Unity of Being', according to which the Creator (*Haq*) and the Created (*Khalq*) were identical; in other words, God was the Unity behind all plurality and the Reality behind all phenomenal appearance. Sheikh Muhiuddin Ibnul Arabi

(c. 1165-1248 A.D.), the author of the theory, explains it in these words:

> "There is nothing but God, nothing in existence other than He; there is not even a 'there'; where the essence of all things is one."[23]

This theory was in conformity with the Vedanta philosophy of absolute monotheism according to which the Creator and the Creature (man), or God and the Soul constituted one Absolute Reality. The *sufis* stood for the establishment of harmonious relationships between God and the soul, hence their yearning for 'direct communion with God' which could be attained in this very mortal life (*khaki jama*) through intense love for and total surrender and dedication to the Supreme Power. The *sufi* saints, in their capacity as *Pirs*—the living teachers or spiritual guides (like the *gurus* of the *bhakti* cult) showed the path and suggested the means to their followers, called *murids*, for the attainment of that eternal bliss which was called *ma'rifat* (gnosis) or *wasl* (union) by them. The orthodox muslim theologians were opposed to the doctrines of *wahdut ul wajud* and *ma'rifat*; according to them God as the Absolute Power was indivisible and unrivalled in His eternal existence, and that the relationship between God and man was the one between the Creator and the creature or master and the salve. The *sufis* on the other hand, compared this relationship with the one that existed between the Lover and the Beloved or Husband and wife. According to them, the presence of God could be felt by any one who attended to His call with a loving heart. The *sufis* held that God was an invisible Absolute Reality and an Eternal Beauty which they named as *Jamal*, and this universe was not a mere illusion either; it was the visible or outward manifestation of God, and it was named as *Husn* (lovable beauty). They argued that 'self-manifestation and desire to be loved' was an essential attribute of the Eternal Beauty. Hence the *sufi* philosophy was based on the principle of 'Love' which was 'the essence of all religions' and 'the cause of all creation'.[24]

The mystics practised austerities and laid stress on complete surrender to the will of God; they stood for 'self-purification' and complete 'absorption in their Beloved God' which could not be secured 'by self-endeavour'. They felt that the purity of heart was far greater than rituals and ceremonials and that it was the only way by which truth could be realised. According to one version, a *sufi* had to pass through ten stages of dedication to God before he could attain communion with Him; these were: Tauba (Repentance), *Wara'* (Abstinence), *zuhd* (Piety), *Faqr* (Poverty), *Sabr* (Patience), *Shukr* (Gratitude), *Khauf* (Fear), *Raja* (Hope), *Tawakkul* (Contentment) and *Riza* (Submission to the Divine Will).[25]

Like the *bhakti* reformers, most of the *sufis* renounced the materialistic pursuits of the world; it was called *Tark i Dunya* which has been explained by K.A. Nizami thus:

> "The general impression that *tark i dunya* meant adopting an hermit's attitude towards life and severing all earthly connections is not confirmed by contemporary mystic records. In fact, it was not the world as such which the mystics rejected but the materialistic approach towards life and its problems which they hated and despised. The more a man got involved in materialistic pursuits, farther he drifted from his spiritual objectives."[26]

Some of the *sufi* saints observed celibacy while others married and lived as ordinary householders. A few of the prominent *sufis* are said to have more than one living wife because it was permitted by the Islamic law. They mostly depended on *futuh* or 'unasked for charity' though some of them took up to the cultivation of waste land as the means of their livelihood; of course, it was never their intention to create a class of parasites on the society. The *sufis* lived in the hermitages, called *khanqahs* (monasteries) or *jamait khana*—'the place of congregation'. Usually the *sufis* avoided government service as also the state patronage although some of them accepted government grants in land and money and lived in affluence.

Impact of Bhakti Movement on the Indian Sufis

It is now universally recognised that the prevalence of Bhakti Movement exercised a profound impact on the Indian Sufism and *vice versa*. The *sufi* doctrines show a striking similarity with Vedanta but it was not because of the instant impact of the Indian thought on the former in the medieval age. The *sufi* philosophy was nourished on the Persian soil which, in turn, had been permeated with Buddhism and Vedic philosophy long before the birth of Islam. It was thus the remote Indian cultural heritage of *sufism* which provided it with religious fervour and modes of expression similar to those of Buddhism and Vedanta. Nevertheless, the Indian *sufis* constituted a class by themselves quite distinct from their counterparts in other muslim countries. This later development of Sufism on the Indian soil owes much to the Indian thought and social environment. Free from narrow-mindedness and prejudices, the *sufis* followed the dictum, 'while in Rome do as the Romans do'. They felt at home in the company of the Indian ascetics and strove to look like the ones. They adopted their garments, practices and the outward behaviour 'to ward off the suspicion of the lower orders of hindus' amongst whom they worked for the propagation of Islam. They freely imitated the ascetic practices of the Indian mystics and the *sadhus*, particularly involving physical torture of their bodies and showmanship. Their *khanqahs* were built in the fashion of the buddhist monasteries and hindu *mathas* where Indian

customs and ceremonials were adopted wholesale. Like the hindu ascetics, the *sufis* also shaved the heads of the new entrants to their order and observed certain rituals which were totally unknown to their counterparts in other muslim countries. They received salutations from the native visitors, their prospective disciples, as per their indigenous customs and made those practices a part and parcel of their own organisational set up. Sufism was thus thoroughly Indianised and the *sufi* saints enjoyed great respect among the people, hindus and muslims alike.

Prominent Sufi Saints of India

The *sufis* were divided into a number of sects, called *silsilahs* or orders. According to one estimate, as many as 175 such orders of the *sufis* came into existence in the muslim world. Abul Fazl lists fourteen orders of the *sufis*[27] which apparently found their way to India although only two of these took deep roots in the Indian soil; these were the Chishti and the Suhravardi orders. The Suhravardi Silsilah made its presence felt in Sind and northwestern India, in general, whereas the Chishti Silsilah became most prominent throughout the country.

Khwaja Muinuddin of the Chishti Silsilah[28] was born in Sijistan (Seistan) in c. 1141 A.D. Having lost his father in his childhood, he turned an ascetic and wandered about in the muslim countries until he was initiated into the Chishti order of the *sufis* by Khwaja Usman at Nishapur. In the prime of his youth, Muinuddin migrated to Lahore which was then ruled by the successors of Mahmud of Ghazni. Soon afterwards he shifted to Ajaimeru (modern Ajmer), then the headquarters of the Chauhans, and set up his abode on the outskirts of the town for the propagation of the Islam among the low caste hindus. According to A.L. Srivastava, 'this happened before the invasion of Muhammad of Ghur and the defeat and death of Prithvi Raj. If the Khwaja deserves praise for braving all kinds of difficulties in his evangelical work in a foreign country, it also speaks volumes of Hindu tolerance and friendliness towards non-Hindu foreigners[29].' The Khwaja had two wives one of whom was said to be a hindu convert to Islam. He lived like a typical hindu saint and preached the gospel of absolute monotheism in the true spirit of the Vedanta philosophy with the only difference that he gave the name Allah to the Almighty Creator. He won over the hearts of the people around him by his selfless service to the poor and the needy and occasionally went on spiritual tours to various parts of Rajputana. The Khwaja enjoyed a long life and made many converts to Islam through peaceful means from among the sturdy rajputs; he also attempted to pacify the sour tempers of the hindus after the loss of their political independence. His mausoleum at Ajmer has since become an important centre of pilgrimage for hindus and muslims alike.

Sheikh Hamiduddin,[30] one of the disciples of Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti, set up his abode in a mud-house in a village near Nagaur (Rajputana) and carried on peaceful propagation of Islam among the rajputs. He married and lived on cultivation like an ordinary Indian villager. Vegetarian by food-habits, he mixed freely with the hindus and won their admiration for his virtuous living. Sheikh Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, yet another disciple of Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti, was an immigrant from Ferghana, which, later on, became famous as the homeland of Babar. He settled in Delhi during the reign of Altumish on the directive of Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti. He declined to accept the royal patronage and professed to live in poverty. Music, vocal as well as instrumental, was considered to be of great spiritual value by the Chishti saints;[31] accordingly, they invited musicians and singers, hindus and muslims alike, to entertain the audience at their *khanqahs* by the recitation of spiritual songs and hymns. It added to the cultural aspect of Sufism and attracted huge crowds of listeners even when they had no intentions of embracing Islam. It is said that Bakhtiyar Kaki was very fond of spiritual music; once during the course of a musical concert, he fell into a state of ecstasy and breathed his last sometime in 1235 A.D. It is generally held that Qutub Minar, whose construction was started by Qutubuddin Aibek and completed by Altumish, was named after this *sufi* saint; his remains lie buried in a small mausoleum in the vicinity of the Minar.

Sheikh Farid or Baba Farid[32] (1175-1265) of Ajodhan (modern Pakpatan in Pakistan) was a disciple of Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki. He belonged to a royal family of Afghanistan[33] and his grandfather had migrated to Multan. Sheikh Farid led a householder's life. He is said to have many wives and children, brought up in a state of utmost poverty. A brilliant orator with poetic expression, Farid popularised the Chishti order throughout the country. He rubbed shoulders with the *bhakti* reformers and mixed freely with the hindu masses. His discourses and spiritual expositions went home to all the people, hindus and muslim alike. A fairly large number of his 'pithy sayings' have been incorporated in the *Adi Granth* of the sikhs.[34] Sheikh Farid's '*Jama'at Khana* at Ajodhan', writes K.A. Nizami, 'was one of the great mystic centres of the age, and all sorts of people—high and low, rich and poor, flocked to it to soothe their tired nerves in the cool, spiritual atmosphere that prevailed there. At a time when the entire country was resounding with the din and clatter of the Ghurid arms, Baba Farid sat cool and collected in his tumbling hut, teaching lessons of human love and affection. Today the territorial achievements of Shihabuddin and his turkish slave-officers are tales of the past, but the message of Baba Farid still echoes through the corridors of time.'[35]

Sheikh Farid produced a galaxy of *sufi* preachers who spread the message of Islam through mysticism in India and abroad. Hazarat Nizamuddin Auliya (1236-1325) was the most brilliant of his disciples who set up his headquarters at Ghiaspur, now located by his shrine in Delhi. He gave an Islamic touch to the socio-cultural atmosphere of the capital and won the hearts of its inhabitants by his virtuous character and social service to the poor and the needy. It is said that seven sultans sat on the throne of Delhi, one after another, during the lifetime of Nizamuddin but he never visited the royal court nor accepted royal favours. Nevertheless, most of the turkish ruling elite and scholars, including some members of the royalty, regarded him as their *Pir* or spiritual teacher; he was popularly known as *Mahbub i Ilahi* by his followers, called murids. Hazarat Nizamuddin Auliya was an exception among the prominent Chishti saints who practised celibacy; his successor at the Chishti *Khanpah* of Delhi was Sheikh Nasiruddin Chiragh. Sheikh Salim Chishti was a contemporary of Akbar the Great. He lived the life of an ordinary householder in his cave-dwelling at Sikri long before the emperor decided to build his imperial capital there. It was Akbar who, because of his intensely religious and mystic attitude towards life, felt drawn towards the saint and struck a personal attachment with him. The scholars of political history of the time know how Prince Salim (later the emperor Jahangir) was born at the hermitage of the Sheikh and also named after him by Akbar; the latter loved to call his infant son as Sheikhu Baba. Sheikh Salim Chishti expired during the lifetime of Akbar and was buried in the courtyard of the *Jama Masjid* of Fatehpur Sikri. Akbar ordered the construction of a beautiful mausoleum over his grave which attracts millions of the pilgrims, hindus as well as muslims, and visitors from all over the world as one of the extant monuments of exquisite beauty in the midst of the ruins of Fatehpur Sikri.

The Suhravardi Silsilah[36] was the second most popular order of the *sufis* which flourished in northwestern India, its foundations on the Indian soil were laid by Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya of Multan. Born at Kot Aror near Multan in c. 1182, Bahauddin spent many years of his youthful life in central Asia where he visited many important centres of Islamic learning, including Mecca, Medina, Baghdad, Samarqand, Bukhara and Khurasan. He was initiated into mysticism by Sheikh Shahabuddin of Baghdad. Bahauddin carried on his missionary work at Multan for about a quarter of a century before his death in 1262 A.D., and rose to be the most prominent muslim divine of his age in northwestern India. Unlike the Chishti saints, the exponents of the Suhravardi order did not believe in excessive austerity or self-mortification; rather they constituted an influential and affluent priesthood of the muslims. They lived comfortable family lives and felt no scruples in accepting costly presents and patronage from the muslim aristocracy. They were thick with the ruling elite, amassed

huge wealth and took active part in state politics. After his death, Sheikh Bahauddin was succeeded by his son Sadruddin Arif as the chief pontiff (*khalifa*) of the Suhravardi order at Multan while one of his disciples, Sayyad Jalaluddin Surkh Bukhari, set up his *khanqah* at Uchch (Sind). The Suhravardi Silsilah was confined mostly to the upper strata of the muslim society. The visitors in its *khanqahs* were treated just like guests and lavishly entertained to dainty dishes. According to an observation, 'all kinds of people were not welcomed at the Suhravardi *khanqahs*. Bahauddin Zakariya is reported to have said that he had nothing to do with the general public as no reliance could be placed upon them. He gave spiritual blessings to the select, and did not permit *qalandars* and other *fakirs* to visit his *khanqah*. He had fixed hours for meeting visitors. He did not like to be disturbed by them at odd hours '[37]

Impact of Sufism on Indian Society

Like the Bhakti Movement, Sufism also acted as a great social force in moulding the character of the medieval Indian society. The *sufi* saints added to the numerical strength of the muslim population by encouraging conversions to Islam through peaceful and non-violent means. They played a great role in building the social and cultural life of the muslims. They set into motion the forces for the rapid Indianisation of Islam as well as the muslims. They defined the ethical standards, built the moral character of the muslim youth and helped them in developing a healthy and rational attitude towards life. The *sufis* played a significant role in the educational advancement of the society. Their *khanqahs* became centres of knowledge and wisdom. The religious discourses of the *sufis* helped in the intellectual and spiritual advancement of the audience while in some *khanqahs* formal religious education was also imparted; some of the *sufi* saints themselves acted as teachers.

Sufism exercised a healthy influence in bringing about reconciliation between the hindus and muslims although its direct-impact on the hindu religious thought and social life was negligible. The *sufis*, particularly belonging to the Chishti order, established rapport with the low caste hindus but voluntary conversions on large scale were practically unknown. The hindus, particularly belonging to the high castes, remained aloof from the *sufi* saints for a very long time. It was only in the reign of Akbar that some of the Persian-educated hindus began to show interest in the *sufi* philosophy of the Chishti order which bore striking resemblances with the *Vedanta*. The nationalist outlook and the policy of secularism as adopted by Akbar and his successors made the *sufi* literature and thought popular with the hindu intellectuals, thus giving birth to a new class of the *sufi* saints and scholars who were hindus by faith and conviction but who expressed their mystic thoughts in Persian

and Urdu languages. The *sufi* doctrine of *Suleh Kul* or Universal Brotherhood had a great humanistic appeal behind it which crossed all religious barriers and developed fellow-feelings between hindus and muslims; the *bhakti* reformers gave a helping hand to the *sufis* in bringing about hindu-muslim unity. The *sufi* saints and *bhakti* reformers, in general, were revered by the Indian masses, hindus and muslims alike; thus hindu saints respected by the muslims, and muslim saints adored by the hindus, became a popular phenomenon of the medieval Indian social life. The way some of the hindu intellectuals, without sacrificing their ancestral faith, developed a fondness for *sufi* literature and shared their mystical experiences with the muslim divines bespeaks highly of the broad-mindedness and catholicity of the socio-cultural leadership of both the communities; it fostered the feelings of religious tolerance between the hindus and muslims and electrified the process of synthesis between their socio-cultural traits.

Notes:

1. a Sanskrit word, derived from the root *bhaj* which means 'to adore or worship'; one who adores God with devotion is a *bhakta* or devotee of God.
2. The term Vedanta is composed of two words, *Veda* and the *anta;* the latter implies 'the end', the close or conclusion of the Vedas as a *shruti* or 'revealed' literature. More precisely speaking, the *Vedanta* comprises the subject-matter of the *Aranyakas* or 'the forest books' and as many as 108 Upanishads.
3. According to Maurice Winternitz 'the later philosophy of the Indians is rooted in the Upanishads . . . all philosophical systems and religions which have arisen in the course of the centuries, the heretical Buddhism no less than the orthodox Brahmanical religion of the post-Buddhist period, have sprung from the soil of the Upanishad doctrine.'—*A History of Indian Literature*, 2 vols (Calcutta, 1927-33), I, sec revised ed; Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, New Delhi, 1972, pp 264-65.
4. Referred to as Monism; many and varied religious cults of the hindus ultimately find their way to Monism or the concept of oneness of all life.
5. Be it known to thee that it is the work of *karmayogi*, Shed thy sectarian outlook, materialistic considerations or other worldly prejudices. if any, and go through it with a discerning mind; perhaps thou may taste the nectar of objectivity that permeates its pages". *JLM.*
6. divers; viz; those dived into the ocean of Divinity: those in deep wisdom.
7. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, *Development of Religion in South India*; Orient Longmans, 1963, pp. 83-89.
8. Refer back to chapter second of this study, entitled, "Pre-Muslim Indian Society".
9. Later Hindu Civilisation, *loc. cit.*, p. 175.
10. For further details refer to *Alberuni's India* (Sachau), II, ch. LXVII. For our comments thereon refer to chapter second of this study.
11. *Alberuni's India* (Sachau), I, ch. 2.
12. G.C. Narang, *Transformation of Sikhism*, New Delhi, 1960.

13. A L. Srivastava, *Medieval Indian Culture. loc, cit.*, p. 54.
14. For details refer to Aiyangar S. Krishnaswami, *Sri Ramanujacharya*, Natesan, Madras, & A. Govindacharyasvamin, *Life* of *Ramanuja*, Madras, 1906.
15. For details refer to G. H. Westcott, *Kabir and The Kabir Panth*, 2nd ed, Calcutta, 1953.
16. The only child of Rana Ratna Singh Rathor and a great-grand daughter of Rao Jodhaji, the founder of Jodhpur. Jaimal, the heroic defender of Chittor against Akbar's onslaught in 1567-68 was her cousin.
17. For details refer to S. K. De, *Early History of the Vaishnava Faith and Movement in Bengal*, Calcutta, 1942.
18. Yusuf Hussain, *Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture, loc. cit* , p. 33.
19. Mir Valiuddin, "Sufi Movement in India" in *An Outline of the Cultural History of India*, edited by Syed Abdul Latif, Hyderabad (India), 1958.
20. Refer to Tara Chand, *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, Allahabad, 1946.
21. quoted by Valiuddin in the *Cultural History of India; op. cit.*. p. 221.
22. Yusuf Hussain, *Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture op. cit.*, pp. 35-36.
23. For details refer to A. E. Afife, *The Mystical Philosophy of Muhiuddin Ibnul Arabi*, Cambridge, 1939.
24. For a detailed exposition of the *sufi* doctrines, refer to J. C. Oman. *The Mystics, Ascetics and Saints of India*, London, 1905, R. A. Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, Cambridge, 1921, & A. J. Arberry, *Sufism*, London, 1956.
25. Sheikh Shihabuddin Suhravardi in his *Awarif ul Ma'aril*, quoted in K. A. Nizami, "Religion and Politics in India" *loc. cit.*, p. 231.
26. *Religions and Politics in India, op. cit.*, p. 237.
27. Abul Fazl, *Ain i Akbari* (Jarrett), *loc. cit.* Vol. III, p. 354.
28. The Chishtis claim their origin to Abu Ishaq. ninth in succession from Ali, son-in-law of the Prophet, who had settled at Chisht in Khurasan.
29. A. L. Srivastava, *Medieval Indian Culture, op. cit.*, p. 80.
30. *alias* Nagauri, the first muslim child said to have been born in Delhi after its conquest by Qutubuddin Aibek.
31. Orthodox *sunni mussalmans* dubbed it as heretical. Aurangzeb had banned music at the imperial court, dismissed all the musicians and singers and stopped the *madad i muash* of all the masters of fine arts.
32. full name Fariduddin *alias Ganj i Shakar* or *Shakar Ganj*; this epithet was based on a legendary miracle performed by him through which he converted the sugar of a merchant into salt and vice versa.
33. His father Jamaluddin Suleiman was a descendant of Farrukh Shah Kabuli, Abul Fazl, *Ain i Akbari* (Jarrett), III, p. 363.
34. Harnam Singh Shan, an outstanding scholar of *Sikh Studies*, has identified 160 such couplets of Farid which have been translated into Hindi and English by him. — Refer to *So Said Sheikh Farid*, Panjab University, Chandigarh, 1974.
35. Preface to *ibid.*
36. founded by Sheikh Najibuddin Abdul Qadir Suhravardi.
37. A. L. Srivastava, *Medieval Indian Culture, op. cit.*, p. 91.

Chapter 8

Socio-Cultural Development in Bahmani and Vijayanagar Kingdoms

1: Political Developments in South India (1335---1565)

Disintegration of the Sultanate of Delhi

The decline of the sultanate of Delhi as an all-India power started under sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq. During the course of its disintegration from 1335 to 1400 A.D. it gave birth to a number of provincial and regional states and the two mighty kingdoms of south India, the Bahmani Kingdom of Gulbarga and the Empire of Vijayanagar. The two kingdoms came into existence almost simultaneously. The ruling dynasty of the Bahmani kingdom was provided by the muslim ruling elite of the erstwhile sultanate of Delhi while the monarchs of Vijayanagar were hindus of the indigenous stock. Together they determined the destinies of south India for over two centuries and provided a long era of peace and prosperity to their subjects when the inhabitants of Delhi had been suffering under the misrule of their Lilliputian sultans. The age of the Bahmani and Vijayanagar kingdoms, therefore, constitutes a distinct epoch in the socio-cultural history of the southern half of the country from the decline of the sultanate to the rise of the Mughal empire as an all-India power, and, no doubt, it deserves a special treatment.

The Bahmani Kingdom

The year 1335 marks the beginning of countrywide disorders and general upsurge against the unpopular rule of Muhammad bin Tughluq. The *Amiran i Sadah*—'the Centurians' or the foreign nobles in the imperial service of Delhi, were in the forefront to take up arms against the sultan in Daulatabad. They acquired control of the provincial capital and set up one of their colleagues, Ismail Makh, as their sultan. Muhammad bin Tughluq was unable to suppress the revolt. Due to his old age, however, Ismail

voluntarily resigned in favour of a more enterprising noble, Hasan, who had meanwhile conquered Gulbarga by defeating the imperial supporters. He ascended the throne at Gulbarga with the title of Sultan Abul Muzafar Alauddin Bahman Shah on August 3, 1327. The ruling house founded by him came to be known as the Bahmani dynasty.[1] The Bahmani kingdom stretched roughly from Berar in the north to the Krishna river in the south and constituted the nucleus of the muslim power in the Deccan. It produced eighteen sultans whose rule lasted 180 years from 1347 to 1527; some of them were capable rulers.[2]

Political and Cultural Significance of the Bahmani Kingdom

The political and cultural significance of the foundation of the Bahmani kingdom in south India can be understood better if the readers recall to their mind that the sultanate of Delhi had brought about the political unification of India in the beginning of the fourteenth century and it acted as a binding force between the distant provinces. Unfortunately, it was declared 'an Islamic state' by the sultans which did not meet the national aspiration of the people of India as a whole. Therefore, its early fall lay in the logic of history. Nevertheless, the decline of the sultanate as 'an Islamic state' did not lead to the decline in the political power of the muslim ruling elite in the country all at once. Instead, their political power was decentralised and shifted to the head-quarters of the erstwhile *igtas* or provinces of the sultanate; almost all the major provinces gave rise to powerful muslim states. Islam was firmly rooted in the soil of India and it had become one of the Indianised creeds. The muslims constituted a part and parcel of the Indian society. Islamic culture was gradually inter-mingling with the hindu culture and had become acceptable to the Indian society in general. The Bahmani rulers claimed their foreign pedigree but none took them seriously; on the other hand, they were fairly Indianised and carried a deep imprint of the south Indian culture on their thought, speech and action, and they held their sway and claimed dominant position in the society primarily on that account. Therein lies the political and the socio-cultural significance of the establishment of the Bahmani kingdom ins outh India.

Successor States of the Bahmanis

The decline of the Bahmani kingdom set in after the death of Sultan Muhammad Shah III in 1482 A.D. In the course of its dis-integration, it gave birth to five independent muslim states—Ahmadnagar, Bijapur, Golconda, Berar and Bidar. The state of Bijapur was set up by a turkish noble Yusuf Ali Shah in 1489; the ruling house founded by him came to be called the Adilshahi dynasty of Bijapur. Malik Ahmad, governor of Junar, declared himself independent of the Bahmani kingdom with the title of Sultan Nizam

Shah in 1490. He shifted his headquarters to the newly constructed township of Ahmadnagar and laid the foundation of the Nizamshahi dynasty of Ahmadnagar; he conquered Daulatabad in 1499 A.D. Fatehullah Imad Shah, governor of Berar, also asserted his independence in about 1490 and thus became the founder of the Imadshahi dynasty of Berar. Qutub Shah, governor of Telengana, set up as independent ruler with his headquarters at Golconda in 1512 A.D., the ruling house founded by him was known after him as the Qutubshahi dynasty. The last ruler of the Bahmani dynasty was Kalimullah, who having been shorn of all the outlying provinces of the kingdom, had been reduced to the position of a petty chieftain with his headquarters at Bidar. He was deposed by his crafty *wazir* Amir Ali Barid in 1527, and thus the Bahmani kingdom passed out of existence.

Foundation of Vijayanagar

The kingdom of Vijayanagar[3] came into existence almost simultaneously with that of the Bahmanids in the south. It was founded by two brothers Harihar and Bukka Rai who were probably kinsmen and revenue officials of Pratap Rudra Deva II, the Kakatiya ruler of Warrangal.[4] When the kingdom of Warrangal was overrun (1323 A.D.) by the Tughluqs they shifted to Anegondi (or Kampili) and entered into the service of its local hindu chieftain. Anegondi also fell into the hands of the turkish armies after some time and the two brothers were taken captives to Delhi. They were subsequently released by Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq and allowed to return to the south as the imperial agents of Delhi. They, however, turned freedom fighters who championed the cause of liberation of the south from the turkish domination. In 1336, with the assistance and blessings of the celebrated sage Vidyaranya of Sringeri, they founded a new habitat at a strategic location, surrounded by hills and forests, on the bank of the Tungbhadra river, as a place of protection against the sudden onslaught of the turkish invaders. It was named Vijayanagar. Harihar became its first ruler, and, on his death in 1356, was succeeded by Bukka Rai who also enjoyed a long reign of 21 years (1356-77). As a matter of expediency, the two brothers did not assume the royal titles and preferred to be known as leaders of popular hindu reaction against the muslim domination of the south. During their lifetime, Vijayanagar developed into a vast kingdom which extended from the Tungbhadra valley in the north to the tip of the peninsula along the eastern coast. A muslim principality of Madura, which had come into existence in 1335-36, was conquered and annexed to the Vijayanagar kingdom by Bukka Rai towards the close of his reign. Gradually the whole of south India beyond the Krishna and Tungbhadra rivers passed under the sway of the Vijayanagar empire. The credit for the conquest of Kanara country, Mysore, Trichinopoly and Kanchi goes to Harihar II (1377-1404) who bore the imperial titles of *Maharaja Adhiraja* and *Raja Parmeshwara;*

Harihar II also invaded Ceylon and extracted tribute from its ruler. The Vijayanagar empire exercised control over a number of sea ports, the flourishing centres of maritime trade.

The empire of Vijayanagar lasted 230 years and produced three ruling dynasties. The ruling house founded by Harihar and Bukka Rai was known as the Sangama dynasty after their father Sangama. Virupaksha II, the last ruler of this dynasty was deposed and later assassinated by his all powerful commander-in-chief, Saluva Narasimha, in 1485 who laid the foundation of the Saluva dynasty. It lasted two decades and produced only three rulers before being overtaken by the Tuluva dynasty, founded by Vir Narasimha in 1505 A.D. Political intrigues at the imperial court of Vijayanagar, resulting in the frequent change of dynasties, signalled revolts in various parts of the empire. The rulers of Vijayanagar failed to stem the rot and once the mighty empire was reduced to the position of a small principality like the Bahmani kingdom.

Conflict Between Bahmani and Vijayanagar Kingdoms

The rulers of Bahmani and Vijayanagar kingdoms entered into armed conflict with each other for the political dominance of the south and their mutual rivalry ruined them in the long run. The Bahmanis considered themselves to be the rightful successors of the sultanate of Delhi and claimed paramountcy over the whole of southern India. They gave a religious colour to the policy of territorial aggrandiesment and declared *jehad*—'the holy war against the infidels'; whereas the rulers of Vijayanagar championed the cause of Hinduism *albeit* they adopted liberal and tolerant attitude towards their non-hindu subjects. The establishment of the Vijayanagar kingdom checked the advance of the Bahmani influence in the southern peninsula. Raichur Doab, situated between the Krishna and the Tungbhadra rivers formed a bone of contention between the two kingdoms for the possession of which much blood was shed on either side. Bahmani kingdom was the first to disintegrate but its successor muslim states of Deccan inherited the age-old conflict with Vijayanagar although they were usually at daggers drawn with one another also. After the death of Krishnadeva Raya (1509-29), the Vijayanagar kingdom declined rapidly because of court intrigues and internal revolts; its last ruler, Sadasiva, was reduced to the position of a puppet in the hands of his brahmin prime minister Ram Raya who was an able administrator but an extremely ambitious and arrogant man. He displayed religious fanaticism towards the neighbouring muslim states of the Deccan. It provided an opportunity to the Sultans of Ahmadnagar, Bijapur, Golconda and Bidar to form a confederacy and launch a joint attack on Vijayanagar. The mighty army of Vijayanagar, commanded by Ram Raya, received a crushing defeat at the historic battle of Talikota on January 25, 1565. Ram Raya was captured and beheaded and his royal camp sacked which yielded incalculable

treasure, arms, horses and much besides. A couple of days later, the victorious armies entered the unguarded town of Vijayanagar with by their minds 'full of vengeance'.[5] They sacked the town, murdered its inhabitants who fell into their hands, and demolished its magnificent buildings and temples. They stayed in the Tungbhadra valley for about six months and carried fire and sword in the countryside.

The glory of Vijayanagar came to a violent end *albeit* the kingdom itself could not be wiped out of existence altogether. A brother of the deceased prime minister Ram Raya, named Tirumala, set up his headquarters at Penugonda and declared himself the king of Vijayanagar. Gradually he recovered a part of the kingdom and restored law and order there. His descendants continued to style themselves as the kings of Vijayanagar until the total disintegration of their possession in 1614-15 A.D.

2: Impact of Bahmani Rule on the Society and Culture of the Deccan

South India, beyond the Vindhyas, constituted a repository of ancient Indian socio-cultural traditions for centuries until Alauddin Khalji appeared on the scene with his 'armies of Islam'. He disturbed the peace of the south, uprooted the indigenous social and cultural institutions and set the new forces into motion which were to shape the life and condition of the people in the times to come. The social content in the Deccan policies of Alauddin Khalji and Muhammad bin Tughluq has been discussed in detail in the foregoing pages of this study; the account that follows, highlights some cultural aspects of the Bahmani rule which provided a special Indo-Muslim cultural tinge to the northern belt of the southern peninsula from the Vindhyas to the banks of the Tungbhadra and the Krishna rivers.

Nature of the Bahmani Rule

The Bahmani ruling elite, including their royal dynasty, comprised a band of the foreign immigrants to India who held charge of the erstwhile imperial government and administration in the south under Muhammad bin Tughluq. They belonged to the 'colonies of muslim soldiers and generals' who had found lodgement in various parts of the country';[6] mostly foreign in blood and thought, they established in the Deccan a foreign rule exactly similar to the one set up by Qutubuddin Aibek and his succeeding 'slave sultans' in Delhi in the beginning of the thirteenth century. They cut off the people of the Deccan from the imperial government of Delhi which, though foreign in character, had compensated them by bringing them into the mainstream of the country's life. Therefore, the Bahmani rule implied the establishment of foreign domination

by military adventurers from central Asia and it bore no comparison with the Vijayanagar empire wherein the people of the southern peninsula had regained political independence, may be on regional level, under the inspiring guidance of their indigenous ruling elite. Secondly, the Bahmanis, following in the foot-prints of the sultans of Delhi, established in the Deccan what was called 'an Islamic state' in which all the powers were concentrated in the hands of the muslim nobility for a long time; some of its rulers were religious fanatics who gave preferential treatment to their muslim subjects whose number, in the beginning, was very small; they encouraged conversions to Islam by fair means or foul, and fanned the feelings of communalism among their subjects in order to retain the predominance of the muslims in all walks of life. The non-muslims were treated as *zimmis;* they had to pay *jaziya* and suffer from quite a few social and civil disabilities. The *grandees* of the kingdom rolled in wealth while the subjects were poor though contented. Nevertheless, most of the Bahmani rulers and their ministers successfully maintained peace and tranquillity in the kingdom; some of them were benevolent despots who earned the goodwill of their subjects because of their public welfare activities. On the whole, the Bahmanis were very successful rulers according to the medieval standards.

The Bahmani kingdom was divided into four provinces, called *tarafs*, with their headquarters at Gulbarga, Daulatabad, Berar and Bidar; each province was entrusted to an *amir*, called *tarafdar*, who received a jagir in lieu of his service. The administration was based on feudal principles; the provincial governors recruited their own armies and rendered service to the centre in time of need. Sultan Muhammad Shah I (1358-71) laid the foundation of a sound administrative system with the help of his prime minister Saifuddin Ghori, a foreign immigrant. He created civil departments, each of which was held by a separate minister. Besides the prime minister, known as *wazir* or *vakil* there were *amir i jumla*—'the finance minister,' *wazir i ashraf*—'the foreign minister', and *sadr i jahan*—'head of the ecclesiastical and judicial departments'. *Nazir* acted as the deputy finance minister while a deputy minister, called *peshwa*, was attached to the office of the prime minister; peshwa's was perhaps the only title borrowed from the indigenous administrative tradition. *Kotwal*, in big towns, was head of the police department and responsible for the maintenance of law and order.

Influx of the Foreigners from Muslim Countries

The Bahmani kingdom had been brought into existence by a handful of the muslim immigrant nobles and the numerical strength of muslim population among their subjects was also very small. And it were the muslims who constituted the backbone of the police state of the Bahmanis. Therefore, in order to make up the deficiency of their numbers, the Bahmanis threw open the gates

of their kingdom to the foreign immigrants from the muslim countries. To quote Haroon Khan Sherwani, 'the handful of the muslims of the Deccan had to get moral and material help from over the seas, and we find an increasing influx of a vigorous human element in the shape of Newcomers from the coasts round the Persian Gulf and from further north round the Caspian Sea, i.e; from Iran, Iraq and Arabia.' They comprised all sorts of men, including 'poets, litterateurs, saints, artisans, merchants, soldiers and adventurers', and came 'to settle down in the Deccan, some at the invitation of the Bahmani sultans, others of their own accord.'[7] They were called *Pardesis* (foreigners) or *Afaqis* (Cosmopolitans). Malik Saifuddin Ghori, who was the 'righthandman of five sultans' of the Bahmani kingdom, provided many incentives from out of the royal treasury and other resources of the state to attract the best warriors and the most talented muslims from abroad. Sultan Muhammad Shah II (1378-97), 'himself a scholar of Arabic and Persian', invited 'the arab and persian poets to the Deccan to make the country the seat of learning and culture'.[8] Of course, the large-scale influx of the foreign blood, with strong exotic cultural traditions was bound to have 'a great effect upon the culture and future history of the Deccan.'[9] Haroon Khan Sherwani observes :

> "It is remarkable how, while the northern cultural influences are visibly declining, foreign influences are having their direct play on the Bahmani kingdom..... it was because of these Newcomers who really came to settle down in the Deccan . . . An evidence of the influx of Iranians, Transoxianians and Iraqis can be found in the surnames of the civil and military personnel of the Bahmani state even in the time of Muhammad Shah I (1358-71), and Seistanis, Tabrizis, Mozendranis, Kirmanis and others of the same nature abound."[10]

Conflict Between Foreigners and the Dakhinis

The influx of the foreigners was felt seriously not by the hindus or the original inhabitants of the land, who carried no weight in the state politics, but by the old muslim nobility of the Deccan, including the northern immigrants from Delhi. It were the latter who came to be called as the *Dakhinis* (southerners) in comparison with the foreigners who were called *Pardesis* or *Afaqis*. The *Dakhinis* were the real architects of the kingdom but the wide-scale employment of the *Pardesis* in the highest civil and military offices of the state quickly reduced them to a minority within the ruling elite and bureaucracy of the Bahmani kingdom. It gave rise to rivalries between the two groups with the result that the beginning of the reign of sultan Mujahid Shah (1373-77), the nobility of the Bahmani kingdom came to be divided into two rival factions, the foreigners and the *Dakhinis*. The latter, under force of circumstances, began to identify their interests more and more with the indigenous inhabitants of the land and made a common cause with

the local converts to Islam. From among the foreigners, the *Dakhinis* received ready support from the African immigrants and 'the offspring of African fathers and Indian mothers' who did not see eye to eye with the immigrants from the Asian countries. It is said that the foreigners, who were more aggressive and brutal in the use of force for maintaining their hold over the country, charged the *Dakhinis* with 'cowardice' and the quarrels between 'the rival factions often led to pitched battles and bloody massacres.' We are further told that 'the foreigners were generally *shias* while the Deccanis were *sunnis*, and this added acerbity to their disputes'.[11] Like the mutual conflict of Bahmani and Vijayanagar kingdoms, the rivalry between these factions of the Bahmani nobility became very acute in the years to come and proved detrimental to the interests of the state.

Evolution of the Bahmani or Indo-Muslim Culture of the Deccan

Much against the heavy odds as mentioned above, the indigenous cultural forces, represented by Hinduism, emerged on the surface gradually but steadily, thus initiating a process of interaction between three types of cultural influences—local, north-Indian and foreign. The outcome of their interaction, which lasted about two centuries, was the birth of a peculiar Bahmani or Deccani culture. Synthesis between these diverse cultural traits started during the reign of sultan Tajuddin Firoze Shah (1397-1422) who made a conscious attempt to strike 'a balance between various elements which went to make the Bahmani state.' He also 'took the bold step of making the hindu element of population shoulder the responsibilities of government, and it was he who, for the first time, gave extensive offices to brahmins who were probably the only learned men among the hindus.'[12] Bahman Shah had adopted a liberal policy towards the hindu landlords who were allowed to retain their fiefs on the acknowledgement of suzerainty and payment of jaziya to the state. It was, however, Firoze Shah who began to offer them positions of honour and responsibility in the royal court. Rai Narsingh of Kherla was appointed 'a peer of the Bahmani kingdom' by the sultan who is also said to have received enthusiastic support from 'some Reddis of the east' in his struggle against Vijayanagar.[13] Once the gates of higher civil and military services were thrown open to the hindus, there was no goingback, and before long, they became the companions-in-arms of the *Dakhini* (muslim) nobles in their conflict with the foreigners. Almost simultaneously the inflow of the foreign elements reached its saturation point and the stage was set for synthesis between the indigenous and exotic cultural traits without prejudice against either. It radically changed the racial and religious composition and character of the Bahmani nobility, and the Bahmani court which was shifted from Gulbarga to the newly constructed township at Bidar by sultan Ahmad Shah in 1429 A.D. the Bahmani court at Bidar acquired a unique cultural personality of its own because

it showed thorough intermixture of south-Indian hindu and exotic muslim traits in every respect. The trade and commerce was already in the hands of the hindu bankers and businessmen. Even the overseas trade was also monopolised by the hindu traders who supplied 'horses from Urmuz, elephants from Ceylon, musk and fur from China' to the court of the Bahmani rulers. The latter had become *Dakhinis* from all points of view.

Development of Education and Learning

The Bahmani rulers were great patrons of education and learning. They invited Persian and Arabic scholars from other parts of India and abroad to come and settle down in their dominions. The state granted liberal stipends and land grants to them and offered them the highest civil and judicial offices; some of them, as for instance, Fazlullah Inju and Mahmud Gawan were the pillars of the state who provided intellectual base to the military possessions of the foreign adventurers and transformed the Bahmani kingdom into a great seat of Islamic learning and culture. Mahmud Gawan opened a magnificent library and a *madrassa* at Bidar for the promotion of Persian and Arabic studies. Muhammad al Makhzemi, an authority on Arabic language and literature, migrated to the Deccan from Gujarat during the reign of sultan Ahmad Shah I (1422-36). Fazlullah Inju spent a lot of money from the state exchequer and strove his best to call Khwaja Shamsuddin Hafiz of Shiraz to the Deccan although his efforts bore no fruit. The successor states of Ahmadnagar, Bijapur and Golconda extended liberal patronage to scholars of Persian and Arabic of wide fame. To mention but a few of them, Muhammad Ali Kabalai, Muhazibuddin Damammini, Sayyad Ali and Hakim Nizamuddin Gilani flourished at the court of Golconda. Firishta, the celebrated author of *Gulshan i Ibrahimi*, a popular contemporary work on medieval Indian history, was one of the celebrities from the Deccan.[14] Similarly, the history of the Bahmani kingdom and that of the Nizamshahi dynasty of Ahmadnagar has been well preserved in the *Burhan i Ma'asir* of Sayyad Ali Tabataba who was an official at the court of Ahmadnagar. The muslim rulers of the Deccan were known to provide land grants, stipends and other handsome means of livelihood to any and every scholar of Persian and Arabic from abroad. It is said that the influx of foreign scholars to Golconda during the reign of sultan Ibrahim Qutubshah was so great that it became difficult to find accommodation for them within the walled city. It prompted the sultan to found a new city of Hyderabad in 1592 A.D.

Strange though it may seem, the Urdu language, which was born in the north, found Deccan to be a more fertile ground for its nourishment and growth. The Bahmani rulers used it as a means of communication of thought with their local populace with the result that Urdu drew freely from the spoken languages of the

Deccan, including Marathi, Telugu and Kanarese, and with the passage of time, itself became known as the Deccani language. Khwaja Band Nawaz Gesu i Daraz was the first scholar of the south to produce a treatise in Urdu, in the Persian script, entitled, *Mirat ul Ashiqin*. The sultans of Ahmadnagar, Bijapur and Golconda allowed Urdu to be used freely at their royal courts while Ibrahim Adilshah II was the first to make it the official language of Bijapur. Quite a few of the muslim rulers of Deccan were themselves poets and scholars of Urdu. Wajabi who wrote *Qutub Mushtri* and *Sabras*, and Faiz, the author of *Ruzwane Shah o Ruhafza*, adorned the court of Golconda. The *sufi* saints of the south produced religious treatises and wrote *masnavis* on spiritualism in the Urdu language; thus Shah Miran wrote *Khushnama* and Shah Aminuddin Ala composed *Rumuz us Satikin*. Muhammad Nusrat, the author of *Gulshan i Ishaq*, *Alinama* and *Tarikh i Sikanderi* won acclaim as the outstanding scholar of Urdu throughout the Deccan.

Art and Architecture

Indo-Muslim art and architecture of the Tughluq style was introduced into the Deccan when Muhammad bin Tughluq transferred his capital to Daulatabad (old Deogiri). None of the buildings constructed by the sultan and his nobility during the imperial era have survived the wear and tear of time. An independent Indo-Muslim style of architecture came into existence with the foundation of the Bahmani rule. It passed through three phases of growth corresponding to those of the political developments. The first phase lasted with the Gulbarga period of the Bahmani rule (1347—c. 1429 A.D.), and the second earmarked the period of their rule from Bidar. The third phase of the Decanni art and architecture, when it reached a stage of maturity, covered the period of rule of the successor states of the Bahmani kingdom. The construction of forts at all the strategic places in the kingdom constituted one of the major architectural activities of the Bahmani rulers. They showed unrestricted and unbiased use of all sorts of architectural concepts and technology, indigenous and foreign, 'hindu' and 'muslim' alike. Therefore, they form a special class of military architecture which shows free intermingling of all the best that was available to the Bahmanis on the spot.

The monuments of the Bahmani period at Gulbarga represent the first phase of development of the Indo-Muslim architecture in the Deccan. The tombs of the first three Bahmani rulers show marked influence of the Tughluq style, reflected by thick walls, with a sharp slope, and with very little surface decoration although the mausoleum of Bahman Shah, the founder, which contains a beautiful band of deep blue enamel tiles of the purely Persian style reveals the induction of direct foreign influence. The Persian influence on the Bahmani art and architecture became more and

more marked with the passage of time thus drifting it away from the Indo-Muslim traditions of northern India in many respects. The *jama masjid* of the Gulbarga fort, with its square base supporting the dome and the broad squat arches, set the style for this category of architecture in the Deccan. Unlike the mosques of northern India, it has no open courtyard and the whole of its area has been covered, permitting the light to trickle through its perforated side-walls and arches. To begin with, the indigenous or 'the hindu' influence on art and architecture seems to have been forcefully resisted by the Bahmani sultans primarily because of the superiority complex from which they suffered as the rulers of 'the vanquished infidels'. *Haft Gumbad* or 'the seven tombs' of sultan Mujahid Shah, Daud Shah and their family members at Gulbarga, however, show, at a later stage, some traces of the indigenous concepts of art and architectural traditions which became gradually acceptable to the Bahmani rulers. These seven tombs, built on a similar plan with decorative variations, show 'the hindu influence' for the first time in the carvings of the prayer niche, doorways of polished black-stone, carved in hindu fashion, and beautiful brackets supporting the cornice or the horizontal projections, crowning the buildings.

The second phase of the Bahmani art and architecture began with the transfer of its capital to Bidar. The massive fort of Bidar and its mosques and palaces continue to bear the Persian imprint *albeit* the indigenous hindu influence also becomes equally strong in their construction. The twelve tombs of the latter Bahmani rulers at Bidar reveal this intermixture of the Persian and indigenous influences almost in equal proportions. They are much larger in size than their counterparts at Gulbarga and contain more arched recesses, screen windows in the facade and decorative columns besides richly decorated enamel tiles and paintings in many and varied colours. The best of these tombs is that of sultan Ahmad Shah I (1422-35) which 'sets the fashion' at Bidar for the later tombs; 'its exterior, having a lofty and impressive entrance archway on each side, is divided into three storeys by recessed arches and windows, while its dome illustrates a happy combination of the flat dome of the Delhi style and the round conical domes of Persia. But the main features of this tomb are the decorations of its interior which is adorned with paintings in bright gold, vermilion and green colours.'[5] Mahmud Gawan's *Madrassa* at Bidar has been constructed in the typical Persian style; it compriseis a huge three-storey building with a rectangular plan, and contans a mosque, lecture-rooms, a library hall and the residentical flats for the teachers and students. 'On its front side', writes Z.A. Desai, 'are two minarets, one at each corner, while semi-octagonal strutures with bulbous domes project, one each, from the middle of the remaining three sides. The whole building is remarkable for the perfect symmetry and proportion of its various parts. Its front side was lavishly decorated with encaustic tiles of various colours

and designs, and the minarets were also adorned with glazed tiles arranged in a zigzag pattern.' The *Sola Khamba* (viz; containing sixteen pillars) mosque of the Bïdar fort is one of the best specimens of the second phase of development of the Bahmani architecture. Its vast prayer-hall is divided into 'a number of aisles by massive circular columns'. Its roof is 'crowned by a majestic dome of fine shape, raised on a high clerestory with windows of fine perforated screen-work in different geometrical patterns. A parapet of pleasing design above the imposing arcade of its facade adds to its picturesqueness.'[16]

Daulatabad, the erstwhile Deogiri, had a rich indigenous architectural heritage; it was studded with numerous public buildings and palaces of the Yadava period which continued to be used without any prejudice towards their 'hindu' architectural style and plans of construction by the muslim ruling elite. A few of the new buildings erected by them showed a free blending of the indigenous north-Indian and the Persian styles. The Chand Minar at Daulatabad, built in 1445 A.D. is a solitary example of a building constructed in that town in a typical Persian style. The tower rises to a height of 30.5 metres, slightly tapering in its ascent, and is divided into four storeys by projecting circular galleries. In spite of its being a declared Persian model, the brackets supporting its balconies belong to the indigenous architectural style.

The age of the five successor states of the Bahmani kingdom, viz; those of Ahmadnagar, Bijapur, Berar and Bidar, marks the third and the final phase of development in the architecture of the Indo-Muslim style in the Deccan. During this period, it reached a stage of maturity and rightly came to be called as the Deccani art style. It showed a complete synthesis between the Persian and indigenous styles with the predominant influence of the latter; so to say, in its process of interaction, the 'Indian genius' established its superiority over the foreign influences. The Deccani art style retained a number of Persian traits in their modified form but it showed a much 'greater influence of the local traditions than before in building methods as well as in the field of ornament'. Not only this, it developed further regional variations from state to state, thus imparting to each a refreshness and individuality of its own. The finest specimens of the Bijapur style of architecture in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are provided by the extant monuments such as the Zanjiri and Andu mosques at Bijapur, Sunehri mosque at Shahpur and Kali mosque at Lakshmeshwar besides Ibrahim Rauza, Mehtar Mahal, Gagan Mahal and the Gol Gumbad—the mausoleum of Adil Shah (1627-56) at Bijapur. The Nizamshahi buildings at Ahmadnagar were influenced by the neighbouring Gujarat and Malwa styles 'reflected in the fine quality of their building material as well as other architectural and decorative features'. Among the representative extant monuments of the Nizamshahi style may be mentioned the Damri mosque and the

tombs of Ahmad Nizamshah (1490-1510), Rumi Khan and *Do-Boti-Chira* at Ahmadnagar, the tombs of Malik Amber and *Zachcha Bachcha* at Daulatabad, of Shah Ashraf Bayabani at Ambad and of Dilawar Khan at Khed, besides the water palace cum pleasure resort of Farah Bagh at Ahmadnagar. The state of Berar, having been annexed by Ahmadnagar could not develop an individualistic style of its own; nevertheless, the mosques of Gwaligarh, Ellichpur and Malkapur and *Hauza Katora*, a beautiful building, now standing in partial ruins in the middle of a water tank at Ellichpur, remind us of the brief but imaginative architectural activities of the Imadshahi rulers of Berar. After Bijapur, it was Golconda which provided the second best individualistic trait to the Deccani style of architecture. Golconda and Hyderabad adorn a number of extant monuments of the Qutubshahi period which impart a unique historic personality to those towns. The *Char Minar* of Hyderabad, which served as the main, entrance to the royal building complex, is a memorable contribution of the Indian genius towards the development of architecture in India. It comprises a central square building structure with lofty arched openings on all the four sides. From each of its four corners, there rises a beautiful *minar* with a peculiar aesthetical excellence in its design and conception, the like of which is hard to find anywhere else. The space in between these minars, towards the top of the roof, is covered by 'a double screen of arched openings to bring symmetry to the whole building'.[17] The structural base of the *Char Minar* is very strong without being aggressive, and the building looks very delicate and pleasing to the eye without being unimpressive. The Baridshahi dynasty which transplanted the Bahmanis at Bidar in 1527 A.D., contributed its own share towards the development of the Deccani architecture, represented by some of their extant mosques and tombs. On the whole, the rulers of the Bahmani dynasty and its successor states made an invaluable contribution towards the development of education and learning, art and architecture and other socio-cultural aspects of the Deccan in the medievel period.

3: Life and Condition of People in the Vijayanagar State

Nature of the Vijayanagar State

The monarch of Vijayanagar, like the Bahmanis, were typical oriental despots with the difference that, being the sons of the soil, they commanded love and obedience from their subjects. They implemented the law of the land, abided by the time-honoured customs and traditions and safeguarded the indigenous religious and socio-cultural institutions. Unlike the rulers of the Bahmani kingdom, they shunned everything that was exotic in character and championed the cause of the civil liberties of their people. The despotic rule of Vijayanagar was, therefore, a product of the soil, which carried along with its despotic powers, the natural obligations and duties of the monarchs towards the land and its people

and the indigenous socio-cultural traditions, from these points of view, it bore no comparison with the despotic rule of the Bahmanis who had established an alien military dictatorship in the Deccan by crushing the civil liberties of its original inhabitants. The Vijayanagar rulers were benevolent despots who undertook the happiness and welfare of their subjects to be their primary duty.

The Vijayanagar rulers were aided and advised in the discharge of their royal functions by a council of ministers, and their court adorned the most talented men of the land, including the provincial governors, military warriors, brahmin priests, scholars and artists *albeit*, theoretically, all of them were nominees of the crown and held office at the pleasure of the latter; the functions of the court were purely advisory in nature. The civil administration as well as the army organisation were based on hindu feudal system of the pre-muslim days which seems to have been faithfully preserved along with its manifold defects. The state, during the heyday of its glory, was divided roughly into 200 provinces which, for all intents and purposes, were akin to the feudal estates, each under the charge of a noble. Important governorships were held by princes of the royal blood, their kinsmen, friends and favourites. The governors enjoyed autonomous powers in their internal administration; they recruited their own armies and rendered military service to the king when needed. They paid to the royal exchequer not the net proceeds of revenue but a specified annual tribute. Many of the provincial units were actually ruled by hereditary feudal lords and princes. The provinces were divided into districts called *nadu* or *kottam*, each of which comprised a couple of *parganas* and some villages. The village *panchayats* administered their charge without much interference from the higher officials and helped in the maintenance of peace and tranquillity in the countryside.

Vijayanagar City and the Royalty

South India was visited by a number of adventurers, traders, scholars and diplomats from foreign countries during the period of Bahmani and Vijayanagar rule. Some of them have left accounts of the political, social, cultural and economic life of the people which are of invaluable help to us in the reconstruction of history of the times; they include among others, the chronicle of Abdur Razak, a Persian envoy to the court of Vijayanagar and the travelogues of Nicolo Conti, Duarte Barbosa, Fernao Nuniz and Domingos Paes. Nicolo Conti, a Venetian traveller who visited south India in c. 1420-21, gives the following description of the city of Vijayanagar:

> "The great city of Bizengaalia (Vijayanagar) is situated near very steep mountains. The circumference of the city is sixty miles; its walls are carried up to the mountains and enclose

> the valleys at their foot, so that its extent is thereby increased. In this city there are estimated to be ninety thousand men fit to bear arms."[18]

Abdur Razak, who was sent as an ambassador by sultan Shah Rukh of Khurasan to the court of Deva Raya II (1419-46), stayed in the south for about two years (1442-43). He gives an eye-witness account of the splendour of the Vijayanagar court and dwells at length on the character and personality of the reigning monarch, the magnificence of royal processions and festivals at the capital and the wealth and luxury of the nobility. He supplements the description of Vijayanagar town as given by Nicolo Conti, two decades earlier, in the following words:

> "The city of Bisanagar (Vijayanagar) is such that eye has not seen nor ear heard of any place resembling it upon the whole earth. It is so built that it has seven fortified walls, one within the other. Beyond the circuit of the outer wall there is an esplanade extending for about fifty yards, in which stones are fixed near one another to the height of a man; one half buried firmly in the earth, and other half rises above it, so that neither foot nor horse, however bold, can advance with facility near the outer wall."[19]

Domingos Paes, writing about Vijayanagar in c. 1520-22, observes:

> " . . . two leagues before you arrive at the city of Bisnaga (from the direction of Goa) you have a very lofty *serra* (a range of hills) which has passes by which you enter the city. These are called 'gates' (*partas*). You must enter by these for you will have no means of entrance except by them. This range of hills surrounds the city with a circle of twenty-four leagues, and within this range there are others that encircle it closely. Wherever these ranges have any level ground they cross it with a very strong wall in such a way that the hills remain all closed, except in the places where the roads come through from the gates in the first range, which are the entrance ways to the city."[20]

About the inhabitants and the wealth of Vijayanagar, Paes has to say that the 'people in this city are countless in number, so much so that I do not wish to write it down for fear it should be thought fabulous; but I declare that no troops, horse or foot could break their way through any street or lane, so great are the numbers of the people and elephants'. Elsewhere he writes that 'in this city you will find men belonging to every nation and people because of the great trade which it has, and the many precious

stones there, principally diamonds.' The writer is unable to give an exact estimate of the 'size of the city' because 'it cannot all be seen from any one spot'. 'This is the best provided city in the world', writes Paes, 'and is stocked with provisions such as rice, wheat, grains, Indian-corn, and a certain amount of barley and beans, *moong*, pulses, horse-gram and many other seeds which grow in this country which are the food of the people, and there is large store of these and very cheap . . . . The streets and markets are full of oxen without count, so that you cannot get along for them, and in many streets you come upon so many of them that you have to wait for them to pass, or else have to go by another way'.[21]

The author of the present study has purposely given these long extracts from the contemporary chronicles to bring home to the minds of the readers the sudden and sad plight of that fine edifice of human civilisation and culture, while at the apex of its glory. The once thought to be invincible stronghold, with the best of its defences, Vijayanagar succumbed to the virus of religious intolerance and mutual rivalry between the two major segments of the Indian society—hindus and muslims. The sack of Delhi by Amir Timur in 1398-99 pales into insignificance before the wanton destruction of the city of Vijayanagar and the annihilation of its populace by the victorious armies of Ahmadnagar, Bijapur, Golconda and Bidar in 1565.

Glimpses of Socio-Cultural Life

Hindus constituted the bulk of the population under the Vijayanagar rule although a fairly large number of muslims and jews besides some European traders and businessmen also enjoyed happy and comfortable lives under the benevolent rule of the hindu monarchs. The latter adopted a policy of religious toleration towards all and did not discriminate between their hindu and muslim subjects. The caste system was deeply rooted among the hindus with all of its inherent vices. The *brahmins* were held in high esteem by the Vijayanagar rulers and they wielded tremendous influence in the socio-political life of the people; in fact, the medieval hindu society and culture of south India were what the *brahmins* had made them to be. Fernao Nuniz, in his observations about the Vijayanagar empire, made in 1535-37, records that the *brahmins* 'are honest men, given to merchandise, very acute and of much talent, very good to accounts, lean men and well-formed, but little fit for hard work'.[22] They acted as ministers as well as the political and religious advisers of the Vijayanagar rulers and held key-positions in the administrative hierarchy of the state. Nuniz further tells us that, besides the *brahmins*, 'there is another class who are Canarese who have pagodas in which are the images of monkeys and cows, and buffaloes, and devils, to whom they pay much honour, and these idols and monkeys, which they adore,

they say that, in former times, this land belonged all to the monkeys, and that, in those days, they could speak. They have books full of fine stories of chivalry, and many foolish tales about their idols, such as it is out of reason for men to believe. But because of this, neither in the kingdom of Bisnaga (Vijayanagar) nor in all the land of the heathen are any monkeys killed, and there are so many in this country that they cover the mountains'.[23]

The upper strata of the south Indian society, including the ruling elite of Vijayanagar, landed aristocracy, businessmen and traders, and the *brahmins*, in general, were very well-off. The courtiers and the bureaucracy rolled in wealth which fostered luxury with its accompanied vices. Within the city of Vijayanagar, 'each class of men belonging to each profession' was said to have 'shops contiguous the one to the other.' Abdur Razak tells us that 'the jewellers sell, publicly in the bazar, pearls, rubies, emeralds and diamonds.' The hindu masses practised monogamy *albeit* the royalty and the aristocracy showed laxity in morals. Nicolo Conti informs us that those who could afford, 'marry as many wives as they please' and that 'these are burnt with their dead husbands'. Thus the practice of *sati* was prevalent and the *brahmins* forcefully commended this kind of 'self-immolation'. In the words of Nicolo Conti, the king of Vijayanagar 'takes to himself 12,000 wives, of whom 4,000 follow him on foot wherever he may go, and are employed solely in the service of the kitchen. A like number, more handsomely equipped, ride on horse-back. The remainder are carried by men in litters, of whom 2,000, or 3,000 are selected as his wives, on condition that at his death they should voluntarily burn themselves with him, which is considered to be a great honour for them.'[24] Nevertheless, the general condition of the women in the Vijayanagar empire is said to be fairly good. The women of the upper middle classes received higher education and some of them took up to the state-craft. We are told that the capital of Vijayanagar had women wrestlers, astrologers, sooth-sayers and a staff of women clerks and accountants to maintain the accounts of the royal household. Nuniz makes reference to the women scholars and writers, poets, musicians, and singers, and observes that the monarch of Vijayanagar 'has judges as well as bailiffs and watchmen, who every night guard the palace and these are women'. The child-marriage was common and the dowries were freely demanded and proudly given. Abdur Razak also refers to the existence of brothels within the capital of Vijayanagar. Considerable laxity seems to have prevailed in the matter of food. The people took fruits, vegetables, fish and meat of all kinds except that of oxen or cows. To quote Nuniz,

> "These Kings of Bisnaga (Vijayanagar) eat all sorts of things, but not the flesh of oxen or cows, which they never kill in all the country of the heathens because they worship them. They

eat mutton, pork, venison, partridges, hares, doves, quail, and all kinds of birds; even sparrows and rats, and cats, and lizards, all of which are sold in the market of the city of Bisnaga".[25]

But he hastily adds that 'everything has to be sold alive so that each one may know what he buys—that at least so far as concerns game, and there are fish from the rivers in large quantities.' We are further told that 'the markets are always overflowing with abundance of fruits, grapes, oranges, limes, pomegranates, jackfruit, and mangoes, and all very cheap.'[26]

Education and Learning

The monarchs of Vijayanagar were great patrons of education and learning; their period of rule was made glorious by the renaissance in Sanskrit—'the language of higher culture' in the south, and Vedic literature. It also witnessed tremendous growth and development of dravidian languages—Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam.[27] Bukka Rai (1356-77), one of the founding fathers of Vijayanagar, and the second ruler of the Sangama dynasty, took prompt steps to rehabilitate hindu religious and cultural institutions which had suffered a serious set-back during the muslim rule. Under his inspiring leadership, scholars of Sanskrit, experts in hindu religion and philosophy, poets and artists flocked to the court of Vijayanagar and initiated the process for the revival of ancient Indian and indigenous education and learing as well as art and architecture. The people came from all parts of south India and received patronage from the Vijayanagar court without any regional or sectarian prejudices; as a result, the scholars and the saints, men of letters and the artists, all worked in perfect harmony with one another to produce 'the synthetic culture of south India'; that was by far the greatest cultural achievement of the Vijayanagar empire. A galaxy of Sanskrit scholars, headed by Sayana, reproduced religious scriptures and rewrote commentaries on all the four *Vedas* and some of the Brahmanas and *Aranyakas*. Most of the Vijayanagar rulers and other members of the royalty were well-educated and some of them actually made literary contributions. Krishna Deva Raya (1509-30) was a genius as a scholar of Sanskrit and Tamil; a born poet with love for philosophy as well as music, he attracted the most talented men and women of his age to his court and provided them the best opportunities for the display of their literary and artistic skills, his reign has rightly been called the 'dawn of a new era in the literary history of south India.' He is said to have contributed five books in Sanskrit besides the one in Tamil, entitled, *Amuktamalyada*. The profuse literature produced in Tamil during the Vijayanagar empire was next only to the Sanskrit literature of south India. The religious literature in Tamil was produced by shaivites, *vaishnavites* and the

jain scholars; it comprised translations of ancient scriptures from Sanskrit to Tamil and preparation of commentaries thereon, recasting of the Puranic literature and some works on religious philosophy. Meykandar prepared *Siva Nana Bodam* 'a short treatise of a dozen *sutras*, perhaps translated from a Sanskrit original'.[28] The *Siva Nana Sittiyar* of Arunandi is considered to be a great classic of *saiva* doctrine in Tamil. In the beginning of the fifteenth century, two great scholar-saints, Svarupananda Desikar and his pupil Tattuvarayar prepared two anthologies on the philosophy of Advaita, entitled *Sivaprakasa Perundirattu* and *Kurun Dirattu*, which 'conserve much of the religious and philosophical literature of the silver age of *saivism* in the Tamil country that would otherwise have been lost'.[29] The last work on *saiva* philosophy was written by Velliyambla Tambiran with the title *Nanabharana Vilakham*. In the secular literature of the times, mention may be made of *Tanjai Vanam Kovai* of Poyyamoli and *Nalavenba* of Pugalendi. The *Bharatam* of Villiputturar, prepared in c. 1400 A.D; is an epic of great merit which tells the whole story of the *Mahabharata* in 4350 Tamil verses; 'the narrative style of the author and his rich diction marked by a profuse admixture of Sanskrit words and expressions make the poem very attractive reading.'[30]

The transformation of Telugu as a language of literary merit starts with Nannaya's attempt to translate the *Mahabharata* into it during the reign of Rajaraja Narendra (1019-61) although his work remained incomplete. Tikkana (1220-1300), the greatest Telugu poet of his times, resumed the verification of the *Mahabharata* from where Nannaya had left; somehow he also could not complete the work which received finishing touches from Yerrapragada (1280-1350); the latter records that Tikkana had appeared to him in a dream and asked him to complete the *Mahabharata*. Yerrapragada, who became famous as Prabandha Paramesvara, proved his capability as an outstanding scholar and poet who 'begins his work in the style of Nannaya and, imperceptibly, passes into that of Tikkana'. All the three translators of the *Mahabharata* are held in the highest esteem by the Telugu scholars of medieval and modern ages alike. The work of translation and adaptation of Sanskrit scriptures and secular literature into Telugu preoccupied the scholars of that language during the Vijayanagar empire. Vemana, the author of popular *Sataka* verses, and Virabhadra who versified Kalidasa's *Shakuntala* into Telugu, were some of the other famous scholars of Telugu. More original and standard works in Telugu start coming forth with the reign of Krishna Deva Raya whose court adorned, among others, Allasani Peddana who was honoured with the royal title of *Andhrakavitapitamaha*—'the Grandfather of Telugu Poetry'. The period of Vijayanagar empire constitutes the formative age in the development of Kannada and Malayalam languages too. The first Kannada

scholar of this age was Madhura who wrote, in c. 1385 *Dharmanathapurana* on the fifteenth jain *tirthankara* during the reigns of Harihar II and Devaraya I. Palkunki Somanatha wrote many books on *vira-saivism* in Telugu and Kannada languages; and Mallanarya, who lived in the court of Krishna Deva Raya, likewise produced valuable literature in Kannada and Sanskrit. The scholarship in Sanskrit was a prerequisite for attaining recognition or competence in the dravidian languages. *Karnataka Sabdanusasana* of Bhattakalanka Deva, composed in 1604 A.D., was the most comprehensive grammar of Kannada in 592 Sanskrit *sutras* with a glossary (*vriti*) and commentary (*vyakhya*) in the same language.[31] *Unnunili Sandesam*, an anonymous poem of the early fourteenth century, is the first standard literary work in Malayalam; it is based on the model of Kalidasa's *Meghaduta*. Nambudiri *brahmins* introduced a new class of Malayalam literature, called *Chakkiyarkuttu* which aimed at a dance-recital of the famous literary works; usually the Puranic stories and other literary traditions of the past formed the themes of this literature. Rama Panikkar, one of the Niranam poets, and described by the critics as the 'Chaucer of Malayalam', composed *Ramayanam*, *Bharata Gatha*, *Savitri Mahatmyam*, *Brahmandapuranam* and *Bhagavatam*. Madhava Panikkar translated *Bhagawad Gita* from Sanskrit into Malayalam. Cherusseri Nambudiri, the author of *Krishnagatha*, heralded the literature of modern Malayalam.[32]

Art and Architecture

The south Indian art and architecture, which had reached the pinnacle of its glory in the pre-muslim period, received barbarous treatment at the hands of the 'armies of Islam' led by Alauddin Khalji and his military generals. One of the declared objectives of the Vijayanagar empire was to preserve and develop 'all that had remained of Hinduism against the onslaughts of Islam'. Revival of Brahmanism was the immediate outcome of the Vijayanagar revolution in the south. Temple building activity and patronage to all the ancient fine arts, including sculpture, painting, music, dancing and the like engaged the wholehearted attention of the Vijayanagar court which received enthusiastic cooperation and liberal financial contributions from rich and the poor alike. The partially ruined temples were repaired and enlarged, and given new face-lift; new temples on very elaborate plans were constructed over the ruins of the old and elsewhere. The different schools of ancient architecture of south India pooled their resources to revolve new art forms and architectural plans. The newly constructed temples were usually of massive structure, lofty stature and very extensive in dimensions to accommodate hundreds and thousands of the devotees within their premises. Among the new additions to the temple architecture may be mentioned as the *kalyanamandapa* or 'ornate pillared pavilion' built in the left corner of the courtyard, varied and most artistic use of the pillars for the

extension of buildings and construction of huge audience halls, and profuse ornamentation giving vent to the entire range of ancient Indian sculptural and ornamental forms and painting, etc., 'a thousand pillared *mandapa*' became an ideal form of the Vijayanagar style of temple architecture. Amidst the stoneheaps of the once magnificent Vijayanagar city can still be seen a few partially ruined monuments of exquisite beauty which defied the clubs and hammers of the vandals; they are the Vitthala and Hazara Ram temples, the Throne Platform and the King's Audience Hall, supported by ten rows of ten pillars each. Most of the famous temples of modern India, situated to the south of the Tungbhadra were constructed during the Vijayanagar era; the town of Kumbakonam, Kanchipuram, Srirangam, Tadpatri, Vellore and Virinchipuram are adorned with such historic temples which constitute the places of pilgrimage and worship for the millions. The last phase of the Vijayanagar architecture is represented by the Madura style which continued to flourish even after the fall of the empire; the specimen temples of this style are found at Madura, Ramesvaram, Srirangam, Jambukevvara, Tiruvalur, Chidambaram, Tinnevelly and many other places i the extreme south.

Wealth and Prosperity of Vijayanagar Empire

By all accounts, Vijayanagar was the most extensive and richest of all the states of India in the fifteenth and the first half of the sixteenth century. It owed its prosperity to the growth and development of agriculture and industry, trade and commerce, including the voluminous maritime trade with the foreign countries. According to Abdur Razzak, there were 300 seaports in the empire which established its commercial contacts with Persia, Arabia, Africa, Malaya Archipelago, Burma, China and the numerous islands in the Indian Ocean. South India exported cloth, rice, indigo, iron, salt petre, diamonds, sugar and spices; and received, in return, horses, pearls, copper, China silk and velvet, etc. Shipbuilding industry flourished in the coastal towns. The foreigners who visited the court of Vijayanagar were simply amazed to observe the fabulous wealth of the ruling elite and richness of its people. The vast quantities of gold, diamonds and material wealth possessed by the inhabitants of Vijayanagar was beyond the comprehension or estimation of Domingos Paes and other foreigners. Abdur Razzak alludes, with bewilderment, to the existence of 'chambers with excavations' in the royal treasury of Vijayanagar which had been 'filled up with molten gold to form one mass', and Paes tells us that the citizens of Vijayanagar 'high or low, even down to the artificers of the *bazar*, wear jewels and gift ornaments in their ears and around their necks, arms, wrists and fingers.' No wonder, south India was 'a golden sparrow' of the east during the age of the Vijayanagar empire and it rightly excited the curiosity

and envy of the foreigners who visited its coasts in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Advent of the Portuguese

The Portuguese discovered the sea-route to India via 'the Cape of Good Hope' during the age of Bahmani and Vijayanagar kingdoms. Vasco da Gama led a naval fleet of three ships, sponsored by the Portuguese government, to Calicut in 1497 and received a cordial treatment from its local hindu chieftain. The Portuguese were thus the first of the European powers to re-establish their trade contacts with India after a long break.[33] Nevertheless, they adopted an aggressive and violent attitude towards the Asians in general and incurred their displeasure; they displayed religious fanaticism and also resorted to slave trade. Albuquerque seized Goa by force from its Bahmani governor in 1510 A.D; and converted it into a permanent Portuguese base on the Indian soil; Diu and Daman were acquired by them soon afterwards. On the whole, they maintained friendly relations with the emperors of Vijayanagar and sought trade privileges from them.

The Portuguese enjoyed the monopoly of the eastern trade for over a century until they received an effective challenge from the Dutch, the French and the English in the seventeenth century.

Notes:

1. He claimed descent from the Persian hero Bahman, son of Isfandiyar. Firishta says that, in his early life, Hasan was a servant of Gangu, a prominent brahmin astrologer of Delhi who had predicted royalty for him; hence his title Bahman Shah had a reference to his brahmin master and benefactor.
2. For details refer to Hasoon Khan Sherwani, *Bahmanis of the Deccan—An Objective History;* Hyderabad (Deccan), 1953; & *J.L. Mehta, Advanced Study in the History of Medieval India*, vol. I, Second Revised Edition, Sterling, New Delhi, 1982.
3. For details refer to R. Sewell, *A Forgotten Empire*; (London, 1900). sec. Indian ed., National Book Trust, New Delhi, 1970; S.K. Ayyangar, *Sources of Vijayanagara History*, Madras, 1919; K.A.N. Sastri & N. Venkataramanayya, *Further Sources of Vijayanagara History*, 2 vols; Madras, 1946; & M.N. Venkata Ramanappa, *Outline of South Indian History*, Vikas, 2nd ed; 1976 reprint.
4. Sewell gives seven traditional versions about the origin of the kingdom, of which the story of Harihar and Bukka Rai seems to be more plausible; the founders are said to have three more brothers. Similar doubts have been expressed about their Warrangal (Andhra) origin; some evidence is available to show that they were actually of Karnataka origin who were 'legitimate successors' to the Hoysala dynasty.—Refer to Sewell, A Forgotten Empire; *op. cit.*, pp. 20-22, & M.N. Venkata Ramanappa, South Indian History, *op. cit.*, pp. 154-58.
5. Caesar Frederick describes the destruction of Vijayanagar at the hands of the muslim armies as follows:

"With fire and sword, with crowbars and axes, they carried the day after day their work of destruction. Never perhaps in the history of the world has such havoc been wrought and wrought suddenly, on so splendid a city and industrious population in the full plenitude of prosperity one day, and on the next seized, pillaged, and reduced to ruins, amid scenes of savage massacre and horrors, beggaring description."—quoted in V. Ramanappa, South Indian History; *op. cit.*, p. 181.

6. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, *A History of South India.*, OUP, 3rd ed., 1966, p. 8.
7. Sherwani, Bahmanis of the Deccan, *op. cit*; pp. 113-14.
8. *ibid* , p. 114.
9. *ibid.*, p. 116.
10. *ibid.*, p. 114.
11. Nilakanta Sastri, History of South India; *op. cit.*, pp. 250-51.
12. Sherwani, Bahmanis of the Deccan; *op. cit.*, p. 143.
13. *ibid.*, p. 144.
14. Firishta belonged to an aristocratic family from Persia; born in c. 1570 A.D; he migrated to south India in his early youth and spent most of his life at the Nizamshahi court of Ahmadnagar.
15. Ziyauddin A. Desai, Indo-Islamic Architecture; *loc. cit.*, p. 31.
16. *ibid.*, p. 30.
17. Z.A. Desai, Indo-Muslim Architecture; *op. cit.*, p. 42.
18. Refer to the travelogue of Nicolo Conti in R.H. Major, *India in the Fifteenth Century*; *loc. cit.*, Delhi reprint, pp. 1-39.
19. Eng. trs. by R.H. Major in *ibid.*
20. "Narrative of Domingos Paes" in Sewell, A Forgotten Empire, *op. cit.*, p. 235.
21. *ibid*; p. 248.
22. For details refer to "Chronicle of Fernao Nuniz" in Robert Sewell, A Forgotten Empire; *op. cit.*, pp. 279-376.
23. *ibid.*, p. 371.
24. Refer to R.H. Major, India in the Fifteenth Century; *op. cit.*, pp. 1-39.
25. Refer to Sewell, A Forgotten Empire; *op. cit.*, p. 356.
26. *ibid.*
27. Which owed a great deal to Sanskrit, 'the magic wand whose touch alone raised each of these dravidian languages from the level of a patois to that of a literary idiom.'—Nilakanta Sastri, History of South India, *op. cit.*, p. 340.
28. Nilakanta Sastri, History of South India; *op. cit.*, p. 382.
29. *ibid.*, p. 383.
30. *ibid.*, pp. 387-88.
31. Refer to Nilakanta Sastri, History of South India; *op. cit.*, pp. 404-5.
32. *ibid.*, p. 419.
33. India had been in trade relations with Europe through land as well as the Red Sea long before the beginning of the Christian era. With the occupation of Constantinople by the turks in 1453, these trade routes fell under their control and became unsafe. It initiated European efforts to discover an alternative trade route to India; Vasco da Gama was crowned with success in this enterprise.

Chapter 9

Babar's Description of India

The Memoirs of Babar

Babar, the founder of the *mughal rule* in India occupies a place of pride among the contemporary writers to whom we are heavily indebted for our knowledge of the country and its people in the beginning of the sixteenth century. His autobiography, written in his mother-tongue *Chaghatai Turki*, and variously styled as the *Tuzuk i Baburi, Waqiat i Baburi* or simply *Babarnama*, constitutes a first-rate authority on his own career as well as the political and socio-cultural condition of India on the eve of his invasions.

Babarnama was twice translated into Persian during the reign of Akbar, first by Painda Khan,[1] and subsequently by Abdur Rahim Mirza.[2] These days translations of *Babarnama* can be had in many European and Asian languages; three valuable translations of the book available in English are those of Leyden and Erskine[3], L. King[4], and Mrs. A.S. Beveridge;[5] the first two translations were made from the Persian version while Mrs Beveridge has made use of the original Turki text;[6] her translation may, therefore, be treated as the most authentic and reliable. The book is not a complete record of Babar's career; all the known copies of the manuscripts show wide gaps, thus presenting the story in fragments only. All told, it throws light on the activities of about eighteen years out of the forty-eight years of Babar's life. The book has no preface or introduction and opens in an abrupt and unceremonious manner with the twelfth year of Babar's life when he ascended the throne of Ferghana. The narrative is broken by numerous gaps in between; the account of the years from 1509 to 1519, and 1520 to 1529 is missing altogether; again it comes to an abrupt end on a broken passage dated September 7, 1529 (Muharram 3, 936 A.H.) beyond which 'what is missing seems likely to have been written and lost'.[7]

Babar was a man of fine literary taste and critical perception; he had acquired great skill in penmanship—an art which was held in high estimation in his times. The beautiful pen-portrait of India

and its people drawn by him in his *memoirs* is not only fairly accurate but also interesting to read. Making due allowance for his limitations as a newly arrived foreign observer, who was not expected to grasp in depth all the socio-political traits of Indian life, the description given by him of the country, its natural scenery, climate, produce, works of art and industry, and the general political set-up is more full and accurate than may perhaps be found in any standard travelogues of medieval or modern age. The style of his writing is 'plain and manly, as well as lively and picturesque'; it presents the country and its people as if in a mirror.[8] Unlike other writers of the medieval age, he goes straight to the subject, does not give lengthy introduction, 'is matter of fact, brief and yet exhaustive' in his description. An important speciality of his *memoirs* lies in the fact that the particulars given in it are neither exaggerated nor written ostentatiously to give them a pleasant look. The book is a lively piece of historical literature which reads like a novel; while going through it one feels as if one is reading a romantic story or book of poetry. In the intervals of his military campaigns and true life-adventures, Babar wrote that 'valuable description of Hindustan which displayed his undiminished interest in natural history, and his singular quickness of observation and accurate commemoration of statistical details'.[9]

Description of the Indian Landscape

Babar was fascinated by the vastness of Hindustan and its beautiful landscape. 'The country of Hindustan', he writes, 'is extensive, full of men, and full of produce. On the east, south, and even on the west, it ends at its great enclosing ocean'.[10] At another place, Babar expresses wonder about the peculiar landscape and natural resources of the country in the following words:

> "Hindustan is of the first climate, the second climate, and the third climate; of the fourth climate it has none. It is a wonderful country. Compared with our countries, it is a different world; its mountains, rivers, jungles and deserts, its towns, its cultivated lands, its animals and plants, its peoples and their tongues, its rains and its winds, are all different... Once the water of Sind is crossed, everything is in the Hindustan way—land, water, tree, rock, people and horde, opinion and custom."[11]

Babar talks of the Himalayan mountains 'on the north, which connect with those of Hindu Kush and Kafiristan'.[12] He defines the geographical boundaries of the country as if he is eager to learn all about India like a school boy. 'The range which in Kabul is known as Hindu Kush', he writes, 'comes from Kabul eastwards into Hindustan, with slight inclination to the south. The *Hindustanat* are to the south of it. Tibet lies to the north of it'.[13] Babar not

only makes enquiries about the places and the people but tries to understand their meanings and significance. About the Shiwaliks he records:

> "Hindis call these mountains *Sawalak parbat*. In the Hindi tongue *sawa—lak* means one *lakh* and a quarter, that is 125,000, and *parbat* means a hill, which makes 125,000 hills. The snow on these mountains never lessens; it is seen white from many districts of Hind, as for example, Lahore, Sirhind and Sambal."[14]

Babar expresses his lack of knowledge about hillmen of India and wants to know more about them.

> "After crossing the Sind river eastwards', he narrates, 'there are countries in the northern mountains mentioned above, appertaining to Kashmir.... Beyond Kashmir there are countless peoples and hordes, *parganas* and cultivated lands in the mountains. As far as Bengal, as far indeed as the shore of the great ocean, the peoples are without break. About this procession of men no one has been able to give authentic information in reply to our enquiries and investigations. So far people have been saying that they call these hillmen *kas*. It has struck me that as a Hindustani pronounces *shin* as *sin* (i.e; *sh* as *s*), and Kashmir is the one respectable town in these mountains, no other indeed being heard of, *Hindustanis* might pronounce it *Kashmir*. These people trade in musk, *bhrvi-qutas*, saffron, lead and copper."[15]

The Concept of Indian Nationhood

Mark the use of the word *Hindis* in the narrative of Babar; he has employed this term very frequently while referring to 'the people of Hindustan'. Babar knows a lot about the *Hindus*—by far the most numerous of the *Hindis*, and he never confuses the two terms. The popular usage of the times, which was faithfully adopted by him without any prejudice as a new-comer, placed the word *Hindustan* first in the minds of the people who styled themselves as *Hindis*, irrespective of whether they were hindus, muslims or those belonging to some other religious denomination. It was indeed a remarkable development. Babar's *memoirs* are a proof if a proof is needed to show that the erstwhile muslim conquerors of India no longer treated themselves as foreigners nor received such treatment at the hands of the hindus—the original inhabitants of the land. The era of socio-religious stress and strain of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was long over; the muslims had come to constitute a part and parcel of the Indian society as well as polity. Thus a new socio-political order, so to speak, was in the offing on the eve of the advent of the mughals; the latter provided an enlightened socio-political leadership to the people, and helped in the development of modern concept of Indian nationhood.

Socio-Cultural Condition

Babar's early career had been full of struggle and strife against muslims—his co-religionists; his political rivals in India also were primarily the muslims. Therefore, he did not suffer from any religious prejudice against non-muslims nor attempted ordinarily to discriminate between the Indians on religious grounds. For him the people of *Hindustan* were all *Hindustanis* or *Hindis* irrespective of whether they were hindus or muslims; perhaps he did not observe any sharp socio-cultural difference between the two communities during the brief contact with the Indians. Be that as it may, Babar did not find the muslims of India to be superior to the hindus of the day; he was rather deeply impressed by the intellectual attainments, industrial and administrative skills, and admirable socio-cultural traits of the hindus. He writes:

> "Most of the inhabitants of Hindustan are pagans: they call a pagan a *hindu*. Most hindus believe in the transmigration of souls. All artisans, wage-earners, and officials are hindus. In our countries, dwellers in the wilds (i e; nomads) get tribal names; here the settled people of the cultivated lands in villages get tribal (caste) names. Again, every artisan there follows the trade that has come down to him from forefather to forefather."[16]

Babar did not take long to educate himself about the scientific mode of reckoning the time and the classification of days into weeks, months and the year by the hindus. 'The people of Hind', he writes, 'divide the night-and-day into sixty parts, each called a *ghari*. They also divide the night into four and the day into four parts, calling each part a *pahr* ('watch' in Persian is a *pas*.) A watch and watchman (*pas u pashan*) had been heard about (by us) in those countries (Transoxiana) but without these particulars. Agreeing with the division into *pahrs*, a body of *gharialis* (gong-men) is chosen and appointed in all considerable towns of Hindustan. They cast a broad brass-plate, perhaps as large as a tray and about two hands' thickness; this they call a *gharial* and hang it up in a high place. Also they have a vessel perforated at the bottom like an hour-cup and filling in one *ghari*. The *gharialis* put this into water and wait till it fills. For example, they put the perforated cup into water at day-birth; when it fills the first time, they strike the gong once with their mallets; when a second time, twice, and so on till the end of the watch (*pahr*). They announce the end of a *pahr* by several rapid blows of their mallets. After these they pause; then strike once more if the first day-watch has ended; twice, if the second; three times, if the third; and four times, if the fourth. After the fourth day-watch, when the night-watches begin, these are gone through in the same way.'[17] Babar is, in a way, simply amazed to note the public consciousness about time and its value, and the universal mode of

informing every citizen about it when they did not have the benefit or possessing the modern wrist-watches.

Babar is all praise for the hindus who learn to classify the days into a seven days' week and the weeks into twelve months which constituted a year; he records in his memoirs the hindu nomenclature of the week days and months and also makes mention of the variations in their normal calendar when 'every three years, they add a month to the year; if one had been added to the rainy season, the next is added, three years later, to the winter months. This is their mode of intercalation.'[18] He gives the tables of 'the well-arranged' weights and measures[19] of the people of Hind and speaks highly of their 'excellent mode of reckoning'. He writes:

> "100,000 they call a *lakh*; 100 *lakhs* a *crore*; 100 *crores*, an *arb;* 100 *arbs*, one *kharab*; 100 *kharabs*, one *neel*; 100 *neels*, one *padam;* 100 *padams*, one *sang*.",

And, thereafter, observes that 'the fixing of such high reckonings as these is a proof of the great amount of wealth in *Hindustan*.'[20] Under a specific headline—*Defects of Hindustan*, Babar takes note of a few shortcomings in the socio-cultural life of the Indians; he writes:

> "Hindustan is a country of few charms. Its people have no good looks; of social intercourse, paying and receiving visits there is none; of genius and capacity none; of manners none; in handicraft and works there is no form or symmetry, method or quality; there are no good horses, no good dogs, no grapes, musk-melons or first-rate fruits, no ice or cold water, no good bread or cooked food in the *bazars*, no hot-bath, no colleges, no candles, torches or candlesticks.
>
> "In place of candle and torch they have a great dirty gang they call lampmen (*diwati*), who in the left hand hold a smallish wooden tripod to one corner of which a thing like the top of a candlestick is fixed, having a wick in it about as thick as the thumb. In the right hand they hold a gourd, through a narrow slit made in which oil is let trickle in a thin thread when the wick needs it. Great people keep a hundred or two of these lampmen. This is the Hindustani substitute for lamp and candlesticks. If their rulers and *begs* have work at night needing candles these dirty lampmen bring these lamps, go close up and there stand.
>
> "Except their large rivers and their standing-waters which flow in ravines or hollows. There are no running waters in their gardens or residence. These residences have no charm, air, regularity or symmetry.

> "Peasants and people of low standing go about naked. They tie on a thing called *lunguta*, a decency-clout, which hangs two spans below the navel... ... Women also tie on a cloth (*lung*), one-half of which goes round the waist, the other is thrown over the head."[21]

Babar's comments are interesting though deficient in many respects. During the short period of four years' rule in India, it was not possible for him to establish friendly contacts with the upper strata of the Indian society — the Indo-Muslim ruling elite, businessmen and bankers, and the learned and well-cultured caste hindus who constituted the cream of the society. Lane-Poole makes a correct observation that Babar 'might have modified this sweeping condemnation' of Indians if he had lived longer in India and seen more of its people.'[22] As a matter of fact, during his short stay in India, it was Babar who had come to like this country *albeit* the Indians had as yet no reason to be happy about the establishment of the mughal rule; even long after the death of Babar, the mughals were dubbed as foreigners by the Indians whether hindus or muslims who fled their hearths and homes on the approach of the mughal armies. That was one of the reasons why Sher Khan (later Sher Shah Sur) could muster public support in his conflict with Humayun.

Babar is justified, however, in making a complaint about the ugliness of the Indian towns and villages which were nothing more than clusters of houses, constructed without any regard to proper town-planning, the layout of streets and lanes and a suitable drainage system; the Indians seemed to have forgotten all about the grandeur of the Indus valley culture of their remote ancestors. Babar writes:

> "The towns and country of Hindustan are greatly wanting in charm. Its towns and lands are all of one sort; there are no walls to the orchards, and most places are on the dead level plain. Under the monsoon-rains, the banks of some of its rivers and torrents are worn into deep channels, difficult and troublesome to pass through anywhere. In many parts of the plains, thorny jungle grows behind the good defence of which the people of the *pargana* become stubbornly rebellious and pay no taxes."[23]

The following observations of Babar are particularly noteworthy:

> "In Hindustan, hamlets and villages, towns indeed, are depopulated and set up in a moment. If the people of a large town, one inhabited for years even, flee from it, they do it in such a way that not a sign or trace of them remains in a day or a day and a half. On the other hand, if they fix their eyes on a place in which to settle, they need not dig water courses

> or construct dams because their crops are all rain-grown, and as the population of Hindustan is unlimited, it swarms in. They make a tank or dig a well; they need not build houses or set up walls; *khas*-grass abounds, wood is unlimited, huts are made, and straightaway there is a village or a town."[24]

It reminds us of the unstable political condition of the times, resulting in near anarchy. Colonel Wilks draws a pen-portrait of the miserable plight from which the Indian masses had to suffer because of the absence of a strong and stable central government which could safeguard their lives and properties; he says:

> "On the approach of an hostile army, the unfortunate inhabitants of India bury underground their most cumbrous effects, and each individual, man, woman and child above six years of age (the infant children being carried by their mothers), with a load of grain proportioned to their strength, issue from their beloved home and take the direction of a country (if such can be found) exempt from the miseries of war, sometimes of a strong fortress, but more generally of the most unfrequented-hills and woods, where they prolong a miserable existence until the departure of the enemy, and if this should be protracted beyond the time for which they have provided food, a large portion necessarily dies of hunger."[25]

Indian Economy

Babar has no two opinions about the material wealth of India which in his own words 'is a large country and has masses of gold and silver.'[26] Agriculture which constituted the backbone of the national economy, was fairly developed, and the land produced enough and to spare. Babar showed interest in understanding the agricultural life of the Indians and has given an elaborate description of the various methods employed by them for irrigation in contradiction to his own earlier statement to the effect that all the Indian crops are rain-watered; he writes:

> "The greater part of the Hindustan country is situated on level land. Many though its towns and cultivated lands are, it nowhere has *running waters* (irrigation channels). Even where, as for some towns, it is practicable to convey water by digging channels (*ariq*), this is not done.... To young trees water is made to flow by means of buckets or a wheel. They are given water constantly during two or three years, after which they need no more. Some vegetables are watered constantly.
>
> "In Lahore, Dipalpur and those parts, people water by means of a wheel. They make two circles of ropes long enough to suit the depth of the well, fix strips of wood between them, and on these fasten pitchers. The ropes with the wood-attached

> pitchers are put over the well-wheel. At one end of the wheel-axle a second wheel is fixed, and close to it another on an upright axle. This last wheel the bullock runs; its teeth catch in the teeth of the second, and thus the wheel with the pitchers is turned. A trough is set where the water empties from the pitchers and from this the water is conveyed everywhere."[27]

Again, Babar does not approve of the method employed by the peasants of Agra, Chandwar and Bayana for irrigating their fields; he says they use 'buckets for this purpose which is a laborious and filthy way.'[28]

Babar talks highly of the Indian trade and commerce which was by all accounts 'well-developed' though the currency circulation in the country was not appreciable because of low prices. Babar writes with admiration:

> "Another good thing in Hindustan is that it has un-numbered and endless workmen of every kind. There is a fixed caste for every sort of work and for everything, which has done that work or that thing from father to son till now.....680 men worked daily on my buildings in Agra and of Agra stone-cutters only; while 1491 stone-cutters worked daily on my buildings in Agra, Sikri, Dhaulpur, Gwalior and Koil. In the same way there are numberless artisans and workmen of every sort in Hindustan."[29]

According to Babar, the revenues of the territories held by him in 1528 A.D; from Bhira to Bihar amounted to 52 *crores*, including eight or nine *crores* of the sum realised as tribute from the subordinate hindu chieftains.[30] After various calculations and considerations, Erskine came to the conclusion (1854 A.D.) that the estimated revenues of Babar's Indian dominions were £ 4,212,000; 'a very large sum', he observes, 'when the working of the American mines had not yet produced its full weight'.[31]

Notes:

1. A *mughal mansabdar* of Akbar; he undertook the translation of the book in c. 1583, in collaboration with another official, Muhammad Quli of Hissar.
2. Done by him under the imperial command to help Abul Fazl in the preparation of the *Akbarnama*; completed in 1589 A.D. This Persian text was translated into English by Leyden and Erskine.
3. Published by Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown and Green, London, 1826.
4. His is a thoroughly revised and annotated version (1922 A.D.) of Leyden & Erskine's work.
5. Mrs. Annette Susannah Beveridge, *The Baburnama in English (Memoirs of Babur) by Zahir ud Din Muhammad Babur Ghazi;* 2 vols; London, 1922; Indian reprint, New Delhi, 1970.

6. The Hyderabad Codex; for the earliest publications of its Eng. trs. by Mrs. Beveridge in four parts, see *JRAS*, London, June 1912, May 1914, October 1917 & September 1921; it was reproduced later on in two compact volumes as mentioned above.
7. *Baburnama* (Beveridge), p. 690.
8. "In Babar, the figures, dress, tastes, and habits of each individual introduced are described with such minuteness and reality that we seem to live among them, and to know their persons as well as we do their characters.—M. Elphinstone, *History of India* (London, 1857), 6th edition, revised by E.B. Coweil, II, pp. 117-18.
9. Lane-Poole, Babar, *loc. cit.*, p. 194.
10. *Baburnama* (Beveridge), p. 480.
11. *ibid.*, p. 484.
12. *ibid.*, pp. 480-81.
13. *ibid.*, p. 485.
14. *ibid;*
15. *ibid.* pp. 484-85.
16. *ibid.*, p. 518.
17. *ibid.*, pp. 516-17.
18. *ibid.*, p. 515.
19. *ibid.*, p. 517.
20. *ibid.*, p. 518.
21. *ibid.*, pp. 518-19.
22. Lane-Poole, Babar, *op. cit.*, p. 195.
23. *Baburnama* (Beveridge), p. 487.
24. *ibid.*, pp. 487-88.
25. *Historical Sketches*, vol. i, p. 302, quoted in *ibid.*
26. *ibid.*, p. 519.
27. *ibid.*, pp. 487-88.
28. *ibid.*, p. 487.
29. *Baburnama* (Beveridge), p. 520.
30. For details as given by Babar, refer to *ibid.*: pp. 520 21.
31. Erskine, History of India, *op. cit.*, 1, p. 542.

Chapter 10

Akbar as a National Ruler

1: Significance of the Mughal Rule

Akbar as a National Ruler

Advent of the mughals was a turning point in the political as well as socio-cultural history of medieval India. Like the turko-afghan sultans of Delhi, the mughals were also foreign conquerors *albeit* Akbar, the illustrious grandson of Babar, the founder of the mughal rule in India, transformed his ruling house into a national monarchy and laid the foundation of a secular nation-state in India. Like the ancient *chakravartin* rulers, such as the Mauryas and the imperial Guptas, Akbar's imperialism was based essentially on nationalistic considerations. He separated religion from politics, rejected the Islamic theory of state, and declared himself the national monarch of India. It was he who raised the policy of religious toleration to the pinnacle of secularism. By befriending the rajputs, 'the sword-arm of ancient India', and by according an honourable and equitable treatment to the other hindu *elite*, Akbar made them partners in the fulfilment of his national objectives in which regionalism, racialism, parochialism or religious prejudices found no place whatsoever. Akbar made a sincere attempt to promote the spirit of love and harmony among the Indians by eliminating all the racial, religious and cultural barriers between them. His concept of nation-state, which has been explained in detail in the foregoing pages of this volume, was adopted by his successors, Jahangir and Shah Jahan, with nearly equal zeal. The mughal period was marked by two centuries of freedom from external invasions and an enduring peace within the empire which enabled the mughal rulers to bring about political unification of India by the corporate activity of the nationalist forces, including hindu and muslim, under their benign control. The political unity was consolidated by the establishment of uniform system of administration, national bureaucracy and good government. They took pains to create an appropriate environment for the socio-cultural advancement, economic prosperity

and all-round development of the Indians in every walk of their national life. The Great Mughals played a commendable role in bringing about synthesis between the exotic Islamic traditions and ancient Indian culture. They made invaluable contributions towards the growth and development of the Indo-Musiim society which assumed the form of a compact medieval Indian society in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As Akbar had played a premier role in accelerating the forces of national integration, the circumstances leading to the evolution of his secular attitude towards the state-politics and development of his national policy have been high-lighted in the account that follows.

2: Evolution of Akbar's Religious Policy

Historical Background

Long before the advent of the mughals, rapprochement between hindus and muslims of India had been necessitated by the exigencies of the times. The sultans of Delhi and other muslim rulers of early medieval India had perforce to associate the hindus in the state administration. The hindus, in general, had proved to be very conservative in outlook and too devoted to their ancestral faith to change it for any price whatsoever. As a result, by the time of Akbar, conversions to Islam had practically come to a stop, so much so that even the fanatical *mullas* had also given up much of their enthusiasm and craze for proselytisation. On the other hand, a 'community of political and economic interests was gradually asserting its inevitable superiority over differences of faith'[1] between the hindus and the muslims. The ground for the socio-cultural synthesis had already been prepared by the *sufi* saints and reformers of the Bhakti Movement all over the country. Discrimination between the two communities, though well-marked in the political sphere, tended to disappear for practical purposes because of the establishment of sovereign hindu states, often in the teeth of muslim opposition, in many parts of the country; the existence of these states acted as a sort of deterrent to the neighbouring muslim ruers to face the consequences if they ill-treated their hindu subjects. For want of numbers of their co-religionists, the muslim chiefs had to recruit the hindus even in their armed forces. The invasion of Timur in 1398 brought about a close unity of political interests between hindus and muslims of northern India. We, therefore, find that, in the beginning of the sixteenth century, regionalism, instead of religion, had become the predominant factor in determining the loyalties of the people to their local rulers. The mughal invasion threw the Indian muslims completely into the arms of their hindu fellow-brethren. The rise of Hem Chandra, a hindu of obscure origin, to the supreme command of the army of Muhammad Adil Shah Sur is a proof of the rapport which had been established between hindus and muslims of the

land in safeguarding their political interests on the eve of the advent of the mughals.

Parental and Social Heritage

Added to the above, the parental and social heritage of Akbar, and the solid foundation of the grand edifice of his state policy of secularism would become at once intelligible. The ruling house of Babar belonged to the orthodox *sunni* school of thought. Nevertheless, Babar was by nature very liberal in his religious outlook; even otherwise he was always very kind and generous in his treatment towards the people. An invaluable advice given by him to the crown prince Humayun on the eve of the Indian campaign had set the pace for the future religious policy of the mughals in India. It was as follows:

> "O 'my son! people of diverse religions inhabit India; It, therefore; behoves you that ...
>
> You should not allow religious prejudice to influence your mind; and administer impartial justice, having regard to the religious susceptibilities and religious customs of all sections of the people.
>
> You should, in particular, refrain from the slaughter of cows...You should never destroy places of worship of any community ... The propagation of Islam will be better carried on with the faith of love and obligation than with the sword of suppression."[2]

Humayun, though an unworthy son of a worthy sire, did bequeath to his son the princely virtues of liberalism and broad-mindedness. He did not hesitate in adopting some of the *shia* practices to please the Persian ruler from whom he got the hand of a princess in marriage besides substantial military aid which enabled him to conquer Kandahar. Akbar's mother Hamida Banu was the daughter of a Persian *shia maulvi*, Mir Baba Dost *alias* Ali Akbar Jami, a God-fearing man of liberal views. Akbar himself was born and reared up for about a month in a hindu house where the chief queen of his parents' host, Rana Virsal of Amarkot, treated Humayun as her brother—something unknown to the muslim culture of central Asia. Needless to say, such fine elements of humanity and dignified social conduct could be found among hindus, the vanquished sons of the Indian soil alone. All of Akbar's teachers and guides in his boyhood incidently happened to be men of unorthodox religious views. His tutor Abdul Latif was so liberal in his religious outlook that the people dubbed him a *sunni* in the *shia* country of Persia and a *shia* amongst the predominantly *sunni* populace of northern India. Akbar learnt from him the noble

lesson of *suleh i kul*, viz; 'peace with all' or 'the universal brotherhood', which applied in practice in his treatment towards his subjects. So also was the case with Mulla Pir Muhammad, yet another teacher of Akbar, who always commanded respect from the young prince in spite of his incompetence as military officer and administrator. Bairam Khan, Akbar's guardian and regent of the state during the days of his minority was a Persian *shia* whose liberal religious outlook could not but influence Akbar in his attitude towards the people. Thus parental social heritage collectively exercised a deep impact on Akbar's religious views.

Nature and Temperament of Akbar

Akbar was moulded into the mental framework of his grandfather; his heart was possessed of the strength of a lion and the tenderness of a lily flower. By his very nature, he was simply incapable of displaying religious fanaticism towards the others. During the first few years of his reign, after the fall of Bairam Khan, he gave a free hand to his orthodox *sunni* officers, including Abdun Nabi, the chief *sadr* (minister incharge of the ecclesiastical department and the religious endowments) of the empire. The latter persecuted the muslim heretics and gave evidence of religious bigotry in the discharge of his official duties; nevertheless, Akbar did not approve of his policy of religious discrimination between the subjects. Akbar was profoundly religious in his outlook and a God-fearing man in the true sense of the term. According to Badaoni, he strictly observed the Islamic precepts during his early youth. Akbar was said to offer daily *five prayers*, and lead the mass on Fridays. He often expressed his gratitude to the Almighty Father for having bestowed on him so many blessings of life, including the throne, power and pelf. Badaoni informs us that Akbar used to spend the early hours of every morning in meditation and was heard of chanting the words *Ya Hu, Ya Hadi* in the orthodox *sunni* fashion. The mystic in him sought loneliness and solitude where he pondered over the mysteries of God and His creation. In the midst of his arduous state deliberations, Akbar sought the company of religious divines and *sufi* saints with whom he conversed with inborn zeal and humility. He performed pilgrimages to the shrines of saints at Ajmer and elsewhere with faith and devotion.

Socio-Political Environment

Sher Shah Sur was the forerunner of Akbar in adopting the policy of religious toleration. Akbar was, however, the first among the monarchs of medieval India who raised the policy of religious toleration to the pinnacle of secularism. His state policy was not based on mere sentiments and platitudes. The socio-political condition of the country was such that Akbar thought it advisable to adopt independent views in religious matters. The non-muslims

constituted the majority of his Indian subjects. Without winning their confidence and active support, Akbar could not hope to establish and consolidate the mughal empire in India. Religion had played the role of a divisive force in the Indian society ever since the advent of Islam which most of its people had refused to embrace. Akbar fully understood the centrifugal tendencies of the complex Indian socio-political order and made a serious attempt to eliminate these by separating religion from politics.

Moreover, to his own bitter experience, Akbar had found that mere religious affinity was no guarantee to win the love and loyalty of his camp-followers. He had suffered much at the hands of his own unscrupulous and jealous kinsmen; nor could he depend exclusively on his self-seeking and turbulent muslim nobles who frequently resorted to revolts, and, at times, posed a danger even to his personal life. On the other hand, Akbar's highly devoted, intelligent and well-cultured hindu wives won his love, and their relatives earned his gratitude by their selfless service to the throne. No wonder, the rajputs emerged as the pillars of the mughal throne whom Akbar could use as counterpoise against his muslim kith and kin. All these considerations deeply influenced Akbar's religious views and moulded his state policy.

Stages of Development of Akbar's Religious Policy

The exposition of Akbar's religious policy was not the sudden outburst of an idea nor a calculated political move. Whereas its genesis was spontaneous in keeping with the nature of Akbar, its growth and development was spread over the years. We discern four distinct stages in the process of evolution of his religious policy.

First Stage—Spiritual Awakening

Akbar married the first rajput princess from Amber in January 1562 and received the voluntary services of the rajput warriors as his relatives. He witnessed, for the first time, at the siege of Merta, a unique phenomenon; it was that of the friendly rajputs fighting with enthusiasm for the mughal throne against their own people, led by the valiant Jai Mal, later the defender of Chittor. Akbar was so much impressed by the undaunted courage and valour of the rajputs, including his friends as well as foes, that he forthwith stopped the practice of enslaving the prisoners of war and their forcible conversion to Islam. The decree issued to this effect, some time after April 1562, made it clear that the women and children of the enemy camp must not be molested by the mughal armies on any account. This was the first step of its kind taken purely on humanitarian considerations by a muslim ruler of India. It was apparently against the traditional Islamic law and practice. Akbar won great applause from the people, particularly the non-muslims, for this noble gesture.

Akbar was encamped at Mathura in 1563 when he came to know that, in accordance with the old practice of the muslim rulers, his government had also imposed a tax on the hindu pilgrims who wanted to have a dip in the 'holy' waters of the Jumna. Akbar's conscience did not allow the imposition of such curbs on the religious beliefs and practices, however superstitious and objectionable, of his subjects. He, therefore, abolished the pilgrims' tax throughout his dominions. Close upon its heels, Akbar took the most revolutionary step on March 15, 1564, in granting religious freedom to the hindus; it was the abolition of *jaziya*. This was a poll tax, charged from the hindus in their capacity as *zimmis*, whereby they were denied the right of full-fledged citizenship of the state under their muslim rulers. The hindu population was divided into three grades on the basis of their economic standing; the richest among them paid 48 *dirhams*, the second grade 24 *dirhams*, and the third 12 *dirhams per annum*. Akbar did not discriminate between his subjects on the basis of religion; instead, he was eager to establish his reputation as an impartial ruler of all the people—hindus as well as muslims. Being a youth of courage and conviction, he wiped out the traditional religious disability from which the hindu subjects of the muslim rulers had been suffering since long.[3] The abolition of *jaziya* caused a tremendous financial loss to the state exchequer and threw the revenue department of the mughal government out of gear for a shortwhile. Obviously, while taking this drastic step, Akbar was opposed by his ministers and bitterly criticised by the orthodox *ulama* for having violated the age-old tradition of the Islamic polity. Nevertheless, Akbar faced the opposition with patience and courage, and attempted to cool the frayed tempers with arguments that the solidarity and stability of the mughal state depended very much on the goodwill and cooperation of his hindu subjects. Abul Fazl defends Akbar's action on the ground that 'when owing to the blessing of abundant goodwill and graciousness' of Akbar, 'those who belong to other religions' (viz; the non-muslims), have like the muslims, 'bound up their waist of devotion and service, and exert themselves for the advancement of the dominion, why should they be classed with that old faction which cherished mortal enmity, and be the subjects of contempt and slaughter ?'[4] It is very significant to note that Akbar had abolished *jaziya* and granted complete religious freedom to his hindu subjects long before he came into contact with Sheikh Mubarak and his illustrious sons Faizi and Abul Fazl, who, later on, became the chief exponents of Akbar's concept of the nation-state of India, based on the pillars of secularism.

We have it on the testimony of Abul Fazl that Akbar was only twenty years old[5] when he 'experienced an internal bitterness for the lack of spiritual provision for his last journey', and his 'soul was seized with exceeding sorrow.'[6] This spiritual awakening

conditioned his future course of action as the ruler. Sheikh Mubarak, a liberal-minded scholar of *sufi* dispositions, came into contact with Akbar in 1573, after the conquest of Gujarat. He became a personal friend, philosopher and guide of Akbar in his quest for truth. His son Faizi, the poet turned philosopher, who was younger than Akbar by about five years, was introduced to the emperor early in 1574, and immediately attached to the court. Faizi, in turn, presented his younger brother Abul Fazl to Akbar towards the close of 1574. All the three of them, individually as well as collectively, found favour with their royal patron because of their high moral character, and the identity of their religious views with his own. They appreciated the liberal religious views and secular outlook of Akbar, and in turn, interpreted the royal gestures and elaborated his visions so as to transform them into a practicable state policy for public welfare. They made a contribution towards the fulfilment of Akbar's ideal to be the national monarch of India. Under their influence Akbar became all the more liberal and tolerant towards the people of diverse religious faiths. He removed all restrictions on the construction and maintenance of hindu temples, churches and other places of worship. Badaoni tells us that under the influence of *brahmins* and *sramanas* Akbar came to have faith in the doctrine of the transmigration of the soul. In order to please his hindu subjects, Akbar adopted their social customs and practices, mixed freely with them and appreciated their cultural values. As a ruler, Akbar made it a point to administer even-handed justice to all, opened the gates of state services to his subjects on merit, and began to appoint capable hindus to the highest offices of the state.

Akbar did not rest contented after the grant of complete religious freedom to his subjects. His next desire was to create a spirit of love and harmony among his people by eliminating all the racial, religious and cultural barriers between them. Under the ennobling influence of Sheikh Mubarak and his sons, he was gradually drawn from the world of politics into the domain of spiritualism. As a first step towards it, he expressed eagerness to understand the fundamentals of his own religion, viz. Islam. In order to achieve this objective, he ordered, in January 1575, the construction of *Ibadat Khana*—'the house of worship' at Fatehpur Sikri 'to adorn the spiritual kingdom.'[7]

He initiated the practice of holding religious discourses there with the learned and the saints of the age; the meetings were held on Thursday nights, and sometimes continued till the early morning hours of Fridays. To begin with, Akbar used to invite only the muslim theologians and saints, including the *ulama*, *sheikhs*, *sayyads*, and the religious-minded mughal nobles, to take part in these deliberations. The *Ibadat Khana* had four *aiwans* (verandahs) and there were, according to Abul Fazl, 'four noble sections in that spiritual and temporal assemblage. In the eastern chamber of

worship (*Ibadatkhana*) were the great leaders and high officers who were conspicuous in the courts of society for enlightenment. In the southern compartment, the keen-sighted investigators, both those who gathered the light of day (i.e. the alumni) and those who chose the repose of the night-halls of contemplation, sat in the school of instruction. In the western compartment, those of lofty lineage who practised auspicious arts. In the northern compartment were the *sufis* of clear heart who were absorbed in beatific visions.'[8] The inaugural session of the august assembly at the *Ibadat Khana* was addressed by Akbar thus:

> "My sole object, oh, wise *Mullas*, is to ascertain the Truth, to find out and disclose the principle of genuine religion, and to trace it to the origin. Take care, therefore, that, through the influence of your human passions, you are not induced to conceal the Truth; and say nothing contrary to the Almighty decrees. If you do, you are responsible before God for the consequences of your impicty."[9]

Akbar took part in these religious discourses with great enthusiasm. The discussions were allowed to be carried on by the scholars long after midnight even when the emperor retired to his sleeping chamber which was attached to the *Ibadat Khana*. Through these discussions, according to Abul Fazl, 'wisdom and deeds would be tested, and the essence of manhood would be exhibited. Those who were founded on truth entered the hall of acceptance, while those who were only veneered with gold went hastily to the pit of base metal.[10] At the very outset, the muslim theologians came to be divided into two groups who did not see eye to eye with each other in the matter of interpretation of the Islamic canon. Sheikh Makhdum ul Mulk and Sheikh Abdun Nabi were leaders of the orthodox *sunni* party while Sheikh Mubarak, Faizi and Abul Fazl represented the group of free-thinkers and liberal-minded theologians. They failed to arrive at agreed opinions on many an Islamic belief and practice, and in the midst of deliberations on very sober and thought-provoking aspects of divinity, displayed a spirit of intolerance towards each other. According to Badaoni, the *mullas* quarrelled among themselves, 'drew the sword of the tongue', called their opponents names, and even attributed motives to one another. One night, Akbar's sleep was disturbed when the two rival groups of theologians actually drew their swords to settle the religious issues at stake. Akbar was shocked to witness the irresponsible behaviour of those self-conceited, greedy and intolerant *mullas*; they were lost in his estimation particularly because of the fact that they had failed to give satisfactory answers to his yearnings for spiritual enlightenment. In disgust, he threw open the gates of the *Ibadat Khana* to the priests and scholars of other religious faiths, including Hinduism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism and Christianity. Thus in

the pleasant company of the renowned sages of his age, Akbar explored the mysteries of nature and sought the truth about God and His creation in the spirit of a disciple.

Second Stage—The Issue of Mahzar or 'the Infallibility Decree'

As a result of the religious discourses held at the *Ibadat Khana*, Akbar's belief in the orthodox *sunni* Islam was shaken. And it were the orthodox *sunni mullas* who had been holding predominant position in the state politics ever since the assumption of powers by Akbar. Abdun Nabi, their chief spokesman, held the exalted office of the chief *sadr* of the empire whom Akbar had loaded with favours.'[11] He persecuted the *shias* and the heretics among the *mussalmans*, ill-treated the non-muslims and made misuse of his official position to advance the interests of his friends and favourites. He was not in favour of granting religious freedom to the hindus; and, he put up a tough opposition to Akbar's liberal religious policy. The orthodox *sunni ulama*, who held important civil and judicial assignments throughout the mughal dominions, would not allow Akbar to rule 'as a liberal king'. Akbar was thoroughly disgusted with their nefarious activities; and, he made up his mind to curb their power once for all. As a first step towards it, he removed the *waiz*-'the head priest' of the *Jama Masjid* at Fatehpur Sikri, himself mounted the pulpit on June 22, 1579, and read the *khutba* in his own name as the Prophet Muhammad and his succeeding *khalifas* used to do. The *khutba* which was composed in verse by the poet laureate Faizi was, later on, repeated by the *imams* in all the prominent *masjids* throughout the empire. Akbar's action struck a blow at the prestige of the *mullas* who considered themselves to be the moral and spiritual guardians of the state. They did not like the emperor to establish direct rapport with his subjects, who, according to the traditional practice, was expected to communicate with the masses only through the agency of the *imams*. They started a whispering campaign against Akbar on the ground that the latter was striving to assume the role of the *khalifas*, as the spiritual and temporal head of the state. Nevertheless, Akbar did not pay any attention to their voice of protest and went ahead with his plans to reduce the power and influence of the *mullas* in the state politics. It led to the issue of a proclamation, called the *Mahzar*[12] in September 1579. Prepared by Sheikh Mubarak, and signed by almost all the prominent muslim theologians and divines of the mughal empire[13], it recognised Akbar, in his capacity as the just monarch and *amir ul momnin*, to be the *Imam i Adil*, viz; the supreme interpreter or arbiter of the Islamic law in all the controversial issues pertaining to ecclesiastical or civil matters. Previously, the *mullas* used to act as the sole arbiters of all such disputed questions in their capacity as *mujtahids* 'the interpreters of Islamic law'. The *Mahzar* declared Akbar to be higher in rank than the *mujtahids* as the supreme arbiter of these

issues. It is clear from the *Mahzar* that it did not deprive the *mullas* of their basic right to act as the *mujtahids*; nevertheless, Akbar placed himself at their head as the chief *imam*, thus assuming the powers which previously had belonged by delegation, to *sadr us sadur* or *qazi ul qazat*—chief *sadr* or chief justice of the mughal empire.

The muslims constituted a religion-dominated society; the Islamic canon was deemed to regulate their social and political order. The issue of the *Mahzar* confirmed and approved of the predominance of religious influence over the Indian muslims. It authorised Akbar to interpret and implement the muslim law whenever there occurred a difference of opinion between the various sects of the *mullas* on religious and civil matters, governed by their religious law. He could exercise this power only when the muslim divines failed to arrive at an agreement. The *Mahzar* did not give any original or overriding powers to Akbar either to make a religious law or violate, go against, or obstruct the operation of such law. As a matter of fact, uptil that time, muslim populace of India regarded the mughal empire to be an Islamic state and expected the emperor to act as the *amir ul momnin*—'leader of the faithful'. and the *amir i adil*—'the just ruler'. It was in this capacity that Akbar was entrusted with the responsibility of implementing the muslim law over his subjects in letter as well as spirit. What was given by the *Mahzar* to him was the power of interpretation of this law as the chief *imam* or judge with a view to resolving the religious or civil disputes arising out of the difference of opinion among the *ulama*. As stated earlier, this power was enjoyed by the *mullas*—'the muslim divines' in their capacity as *mujtahids*. They made use of this power by issuing what were called the *fatwas*—'the religious decrees'. The right to appeal against their *fatwas* lay with the court of the *sadr* at the provincial level, and the chief *sadr* (*sadr us sadur*) of the empire constituted the highest appellate authority in this regard. These officers were all the nominees of the mughal emperor, who held their office at the pleasure of the latter. According to the *Mahzar*, Akbar reserved to himself the function of interpretation of the muslim law which was previously delegated by the crown to the chief *sadr*. The muslim divines were not deprived of their right to interpret the Islamic law *albeit* Akbar asserted his authority over their heads as the chief *imam*. According to the Islamic theory of kingship, the emperor in his capacity as the *amir i adil* was already expected to be 'the fountain head of justice'; through the issue of the *Mahzar*, Akbar asserted this right.

As a matter of fact, 'the muslim state' was a theocracy in which the religious leaders—the *ulama* or the *mullas* wielded great influence in the state politics; whenever, a muslim ruler happened to be orthodox in his religious views or exhibited signs of weakness, the *mullas* usurped the high offices of the state and asserted their authority over the king in their capacity as the

guardians of the Islamic law which regulated the affairs of their society, including the state. To the misfortune of the muslims, the predominance of the *mullas* in the state politics was no guarantee for peace and harmony among them. They were usually divided into mutually hostile sects which did not see eye to eye with one another. The *sunnis*, *shias* and *mahdavis* persecuted their opponents, frequently entered into bloody conflicts with one another and created law and order problems for the state. Akbar had had a very bitter experience at the hands of the orthodox *sunni ulama* who held offices of profit under the leadership of his chief *sadr* Abdun Nabi and exercised great influence over the state affairs for over a decade. What to say of granting religious freedom to the non-muslims, the orthodox *sunnis* did not allow Akbar even to act as the impartial ruler of the muslims themselves because they discriminated against the *shias* and publicly dubbed the *mahdavis* as the heretics. They stood in the way of Akbar in the achievement of his ideal to transform the theocratic mughal state into a secular nation-state of India. Through the *Mahzar*, Akbar struck a serious blow to the power and influence of the *mullas* in the state politics, brought them under his subordination as the chief *imam* or guardian of the Islamic law, and rendered them politically impotent. Therein lies the significance of the *Mahzar*; it was apparently a religious document which carried the most significant political implications. R.P. Tripathi makes a significant reference to the international tension which then prevailed between the various muslim countries owing to the mutual conflict of the rival sects, particularly, the *sunnis* and the *shias*; he writes:

> "The international situation of the muslim world also called forth a clarification of the policy of the Mughal empire. The *shia* kingdom of Persia and the *sunni* states were at war more for religious than political reasons. The Shah of Persia claimed to be the leader of the *shias* while the Ottoman Sultan of Turkey claimed *khilafat* over the muslim states, particularly of the *sunnis*. These warring states were anxious to know what policy the Mughal empire proposed to follow. The declaration of Akbar, signed by some of the leading divines, announced his policy in unambiguous terms to all concerned both in India and outside. The Mughal Emperor refused to identify himself with any creed and declared his determination to follow an independent policy of enlightened toleration within the ambit of the *Quran Hadis* and common agreements between the accredited divines."[14]

It is simply amazing to note 'the worldly character' of the *Mahzar* which 'stands unique in the history of Islam'.[15] Interpreted by S.M. Jaffar as 'the Act of Supremacy'; the document 'reveals most unmistakably the statesmanship of Akbar, who caught the ferocious lions (the *ulama*) in their own dens..... Like King John's

Magna Carta, it was a petition to the king from the most influential *ulama*, but unlike it, it increased rather than diminished the royal prerogative.'[6]

The *Mahzar* came as a bolt from the blue to the orthodox *sunni* circles who raised a hue and cry against Akbar's interference in the religious affairs; nevertheless, it marked the liberation of the state politics from the baneful influence of the orthodox *ulama*. As a result of the vicious propaganda of the disgruntled *mullas* and intrigues of the disaffected courtiers and military nobles, there occurred *the crisis of 1581* which was faced by Akbar with courage and foresight. His success against the rebellious fanatics and their political proteges marked the triumph of absolute monarchy as also the end of the baneful influence of the muslim fanatics in the state affairs. It set the stage for the establishment of national monarchy in India.

Akbar's religious policy was misunderstood by V.A. Smith and some other European writers who relied for their findings on the superficial study of the narratives of contemporary orthodox writers like Badaoni and the prejudiced accounts of the Jesuit missionaries. The *Mahzar* was miscalled by Smith as 'the Infallibility Decree', and by some others as 'the Declaration of Rights.' They misinterpreted the *Mahzar* to mean that thereby Akbar had assumed the role of 'the spiritual as well as temporal head' of the muslims like the Prophet Muhammad, and that, he combined in himself the offices of 'Pope and the King'. This contention is, however, not true. The *Mahzar* did not give any original powers to Akbar to proclaim a new religious law. Through this document Akbar had taken over just one of the functions of the chief *sadr* of his own imperial court, which related to the interpretation of the Islamic law. Even that function could be performed by Akbar only when there arose a difference of opinion on a particular issue between the various sects of the muslim divines and they failed to arrive at an agreement. Again, while giving his decision, Akbar had to pick up just one of the conflicting opinions, as already expressed by some section of the *ulama*, to be more authentic and reliable; his judgment was surely to be based on sound arguments and reasons as advanced forward by various *mullas*. Of course, Akbar was also authorised to chalk out a new policy or programme of action worthy of being adopted by the muslims for their own welfare and in the interest of the state provided he could quote a verse from the *Quran* in support of his contention. Akbar was not permitted by the *Mahzar* to violate the fundamental principles of Islam, *albeit* on the authority of this document, he got the opportunity to knock out some of the false beliefs and practices which had found their way into the socio-political conduct of the Indian muslims in the name of Islam. For example, Akbar had come to the conclusion on the basis of his enquiries into the Islamic canon that the grant of religious freedom to his non-muslim subjects or the imposition of restrictions on the

slaughter of cows, were not un-Islamic; it was, however, on such accounts that he was accused of apostasy from Islam.

Third Stage—Realisation of the Truth

After the issue of the *Mahzar*, religious discourses continued to be held at the *Ibadat Khana*, which were now represented by the priests, scholars and saints of all the religions then prevalent in India. Akbar mixed freely with muslim divines, *sufi* saints, hindu mystics and *sanyasis*, *brahmin* and *jain* scholars, christian missionaries and zoroastrian priests. He was no longer content with the formal weekly meetings on spiritual matters; instead, the scholars and saints of various religious communities were put in perpetual attendance upon him, and the venue of talks was often shifted to the balcony of his bed-room in the *harem* where the discussions continued till late at night. Akbar conversed with the divines in the spirit of a devotee and with the zeal of a missionary to understand the truth. As a result of his enquiries he ultimately felt convinced that 'there were sensible men in all religions', and that every religion was based on some elements of truth. As a natural corollary to his findings, Akbar came to the conclusion that 'if some true knowledge was thus everywhere to be found, why should truth be confined to one religion or creed like Islam which was comparatively new and scarcely a thousand years old'. The attainment of this knowledge marks the conclusion of the third stage in the evolution of the religious views and policy of Akbar.

Fourth Stage—Din i Ilahi

The spiritual enlightenment of Akbar did not lead to the renunciation of this materialistic world by him. He was a religious-minded and God-fearing person but, being a man of action, his attachment to the worldly affairs was very much real. He was a mystic by nature but not an ascetic. Therefore, the truth realised by him through religious discourses and 'the spiritual visions' was intended to be used by him for the happiness and welfare of his subjects. He had established himself as the impartial ruler of his subjects—hindus as well as muslims, and had adopted secularism as his state policy. However, this was not deemed enough by him to bring about perfect harmony amongst his people. He wanted to establish the most cordial and enduring relationships of fraternity and brotherhood between hindus and muslims by eliminating all elements of friction and discord beween the two religious communities. He was eager to weld all the Indians, irrespective of their castes, creeds and religious beliefs and practices, into a homogeneous society. Thus national integration was the ultimate goal of Akbar's thought and action. For the achievement of this ideal he dedicated his life to the service of his people in manifold ways. Akbar was quite powerful and competent to push his way through the fields of administration and politics as he pleased. Being a

benevolent despot, he made use of the imperial resources for the public welfare as best as the circumstances permitted. He overhauled the entire administrative machinery which was gradually transformed into a national system of administration. He introduced many socio-cultural reforms for the benefit of all his subjects and attempted to bring about a synthesis between the hindu and muslim cultures through the medium of royal patronage. Nevertheless, most of the barriers which separated the hindus and muslims were the creations of their beliefs and dogmas. How to remove these barriers was the most baffling problem of which Akbar sought a solution with the aid and advice of the learned sages of his age. Just as iron cuts iron, Akbar also conceived a plan in terms of religion to counter the divisive religious forces which stood in the way of hindu-muslim unity. The outcome of his deliberations was the promulgation of the *Din i Ilahi* in the beginning of 1582. It was not a new religion, nor did Akbar attempt to play the Prophet or missionary in the spread of his 'Divine Faith' so-called. Nevertheless, it was the most controversial measure adopted by Akbar with a view to establishing a national or rather universal creed which was expected to find favour with hindus and muslims alike. His real object was to unite the people of his empire into an integrated national community by providing a common religious-cum-spiritual platform or the meeting ground. Akbar was not so *naive* as to envisage a plan for the elimination of the powerful religions of the world like Hinduism and Islam, and their replacement by the *Din i Ilahi* as a new religion. Rather his real desire seemed to be to create a connecting bond or bridge between the two major religions of the country by breaking the age-old socio-cultural barriers which had divided them into water-tight compartments of the Indian society. The *Din i Ilahi* was a socio-religious association of the like-minded intellectuals and saints who had transcended the barriers of their orthodox religious beliefs and practices, and shaken off the religious prides, prejudices and superstitions which were the hallmarks of the character of the medieval Indians, whether hindus or muslims. In the absence of any specific treatise or manual available on the subject, it is very difficult to define the *Din i Ilahi* as it was understood by Akbar. Abul Fazl, the high priest of the *Din*, who has written almost a classical account of the life-history and achievements of his royal patron in the form of the *Akbarnama*, does not attach any importance to the *Din i Ilahi* as being worthy of mention in the historical narrative of Akbar's times. While making a casual reference to it in the *Ain i Akbari* he presents it in the form of a *sufi* order or assembly of saints and religious divines who were formally enrolled as the regular members of the *Ibadat Khana*; they were forceful exponents of Akbar's liberal religious policy and sought moral and spiritual guidance from him. Abul Fazl mentions twelve principles of the *Din i Ilahi* in *ain* 77 which are preceded by the statement that Akbar has now become 'the spiritual guide of the nation' who 'sees

in the performance of this duty a means of pleasing God (Allah).' Strictly speaking, not one of these principles can be termed as a fundamental doctrine, religious dogma or belief which can form the basis of any new faith in contradistinction to Hinduism, Islam or Christianity. These principles describe the initiation ceremony and the rules of conduct to be observed by the members of the *Din i Ilahi.* A person who wanted to become a member of this organisation, approached Abul Fazl for the purpose. The applicant was presented to Akbar with the turban in his hands; he performed the *sijdah* (prostration) by placing his head at the feet of Akbar. The latter blessed him by raising him up by the touch of his shoulders, placed the turban back on his head and gave him the *shast* (his own portrait) on which was engraved the phrase—*Allah hu Akbar*, viz; 'God is Great'. The *Ilahias*, as the members of the *Din i Ilahi* were called, greeted each other with the words—*Allah hu Akbar* and *Jall e Jalal e Hu.* An *Ilahia* celebrated his birth anniversary by throwing a feast to his associates, and, also, gave a dinner, once in his life-time, in celebration of his death which would bring about his liberation from this materialistic world. The members of the *Din i Ilahi* abstained from meat as far as possible, and did not dine with or use the utensils of the butchers, fishermen, and bird-catchers, did not marry old women or minor girls, and practised charity. There were four grades of devotion to Akbar as the spiritual guide of the *Ilahias*; these were in the ascending order of importance—*property*, *life*, *honour* and *religion.* A person who pledged to sacrifice only one of these things for his spiritual guide possessed one degree of devotion, the one who pledged two things possessed two degrees of devotion, so on and so forth. Obviously, religion was the last and the most valuable thing, the surrender of which was not at all essential for enrolment as member of the *Din i Ilahi.*

Akbar has been maligned beyond all proportions for the introduction of *sijdah* at the initiation ceremony for the membership of the *Din i Ilahi.* According to the muslim law, '*sijdah* could be claimed by God alone, and was due to Him alone and to none else'. Of course, this was not the case with the hindu law and practice. Akbar had introduced the *sijdah*, also called the *zaminbos* (kissing the ground) at the imperial court in 1577-78, long before the promulgation of *Din i Ilahi.*[17] Akbar was an absolute monarch who claimed himself to be the 'shadow of God on earth' on the basis of the theory of Divine Rights of Kingship. It was very clear that he had introduced *sijdah* as 'a custom' in his capacity as the *Zill i Ilahi*, the Lord Emperor, and not as 'a religious command' as founder of the *Din i Ilahi.*[18] What to say of the *Ilahias*, every one who presented himself before Akbar had to perform the *sijdah.* M.L. Roychoudhury makes an interesting observation on Badaoni's criticism of the *Din i Ilahi* on this account; he writes:

"If *zaminbos* was so obnoxious and anti-Islamic, why should Badaoni submit to that formality ? Even as early as 1577 and as late as 1593 A.D. Badaoni offered *zaminbos* to the Emperor in the open court."[19]

The celebrated author[20] of the *Dabistan i Mazahib*[21] gives ten virtues or commandments of the *Din i Ilahi* which were—liberal-mindedness and generosity, forgiveness of the evil doers and repulsion of anger with mildness, abstinence from worldly desires, non-attachment to the materialistic world, careful thought on the pros and cons of the proposed actions, performance of noble deed with courage, softness of voice and gentle speech, good treatment with the fellow-brethren, total break with the bad characters and evil-minded persons and the dedication of soul in the love of God'.[22] Such was the creed of Akbar. The *Din i Ilahi* laid stress on the purity of individual life and devotion to God in the true spirit of the *bhakti* reformers and *sufi* divines of the age. The perusal of its principles and virtues as tabulated by Abul Fazl and Mohsin Fani shows that *Din i Ilahi* could be anything but it could not be called a new religion or *Din* in the literal sense of the term which might contain some hitherto unknown religious philosophy, dogma, beliefs or rituals; perhaps, the use of the term Din with reference to a spiritual organisation or *sufi* sect of the sorts was most unfortunate because it gave rise to all sorts of doubts and suspicions in the heart of the orthodox muslims who charged Akbar of apostasy from Islam. He was dubbed a heretic and an enemy of Islam who had insulted the Prophet Muhammad by assuming the role of a prophet himself. Badaoni writes that Akbar had renounced Islam in his later years and that he adopted many anti-Islamic measures and even persecuted the pious *mussalmans* on account of their religious views. Similarly, the Jesuit missionaries, who had failed to convert Akbar to Christianity, falsely charged him of apostasy and hypocrisy. The impartial researches have found no substance in such accusations levied against Akbar. Badaoni's hostile and rather malicious attitude towards Akbar, and the prejudiced accounts of the Christian missionaries have been too thoroughly exposed by modern historiographers to need more elaboration in this study.. Similarly, V.A. Smith's bitter criticism, which was based on the above-mentioned sources, has also been rejected as it has been found to be unjust, rather uncharitable. It can be said beyond any shadow of doubt that *Din i Ilahi* was not a new religion; it had no holy book of its own, no priests or missionary organisation to propagate it, and no religious dogmas or beliefs to be enforced by it. Akbar did not promulgate the *Din i Ilahi* in the spirit of a missionary; he never compelled anybody to adopt the new creed although it would not have been difficult for him to do so. *Ain i Akbari* mentions all-told eighteen names of the persons who had adopted the *Din i Ilahi* in toto; they included only one hindu, Raja Birbal. The total number of the *Ilahias* of all grades did not exceed a few thousands.

Badaoni has it that Raja Bhagwan Dass and Man Singh bluntly refused to enrol themselves as members of the *Din i Ilahi*, and Akbar is never known to have expressed his displeasure with them on this account. When the prominent hindu officers of the imperial court, who had rendered invaluable services to the state and who were known for their unflinching loyalty to the person of Akbar, refused to oblige him by accepting the membership of the *Din i Ilahi*, its significance as a vehicle for the promotion of hindu-muslim unity or national integration was also lost forthwith. The *Din i Ilahi* as an association or institution of a handful of the liberal-minded and God-fearing intellectuals and saints, set the model before the people in the light of which they could generate the forces of national integration by overcoming their respective prides and prejudices and other separatist or divisive tendencies. Akbar provided not only the political but also moral and spiritual leadership to the Indians of his day; he deserves a place of honour and pride in the annals of Indian history for all times to come.

3: Akbar's Imperialism—Its National Background

Akbar was a born soldier and imperialist by instinct; his initial impulse after assuming the reins of government in his hands as sovereign ruler was to extend the boundaries of his kingdom and attain ascendancy over the neighbouring rulers of India. War preparedness was a must not only for a career of conquest but also for his very existence as independent ruler. His initial victories against his immediate neighbouring chiefs and successful suppression of the revolts of the disaffected nobles and kinsmen gave him a degree of confidence needed for arousing the imperial instincts in him. The programme of random conquests launched by him during the first few years gradually assumed a form and methodology. He evolved out a systematic plan for the expansion of his dominions. This plan received a fillip from his successful dealings with the rajputs both as friends as well as foes. As a matter of fact, the adoption of a specific rajput policy by Akbar and his liberal religious outlook, resulting in the emancipation of his hindu subjects, were the two pillars upon which the grand edifice of his imperialist policy was laid. These two factors nurtured his imperialist policy and provided a political philosophy to his military campaigns. Akbar now evolved an ambitious plan for the conquest of the whole of the Indian subcontinent with the object of establishing an all-powerful imperial or central government under the mughal ruling house. The political unification of the country and the establishment of an all-powerful central government with a uniform system of administration throughout the land became the ideals of his life. During the second half of his reign, it was not his land-hunger or the thrill of exploits which prompted his military actions; instead, he was guided by the political ideal

to establish himself as the lord paramount of the whole of the country and earn reputation as the national monarch of all of its people. His career of military exploits which started with the expedition to Malwa in 1560 and culminated in the conquest of Asirgarh in 1601 A.D., forms a glorious chapter in the annals of the military history of India. Akbar stood for the political unification of the country and the national integrity of its people. Regionalism, racialism or religious considerations were totally superseded by the national sentiments in his scheme of conquests. This was exactly the political ideal of the ancient *chakravartin* monarchs of India. Akbar spent the whole of his life in the fulfilment of this objective and the same ideal was pursued by his successors Jahangir and Shah Jahan with unabated zeal.

One small incident in the early youth of Akbar exercised a profound impact on the mind of Akbar which turned him a national ruler in the long run. Being a man of spiritual bent of mind, he went on a pilgrimage to the mausoleum of Sheikh Muinudin Chishti at Ajmer in January 1562. His route lay through the rajput state of Amber (modern Jaipur). Its ruler Rajá Bihari Mal Kachhwaha, with a view to safeguarding his own position, offered his submission to Akbar at Sanganer, and voluntarily proposed his daughter's marriage with the young monarch. Akbar accepted the offer, and, on his return from Ajmer, marriage was solemnised at Sambar, the whole entourage of Akbar being received and entertained as the marriage party. Bihari Mal gave a rich dowry to his daughter and sent his son Bhagwan Dass with a contingent of rajput soldiers to escort his newly married sister to Agra according to the hindu custom. Akbar was deeply impressed by the highly dignified, sincere and princely conduct of his rajput relations. He took Man Singh, the youthful son of Bhagwan Dass into the royal service. Akbar was fascinated by the charm and accomplishments of his rajput wife; he developed real love for her and raised her to the status of the chief queen. She came to exercise a profound impact on the socio-cultural environment of the entire royal household and changed the life-style of Akbar. Salim (later Jahangir), heir to the throne, was born of this wedlock on August 30, 1569.

This rajput marriage revolutionised the outlook and state policy of Akbar. He was simply amazed to note the devotional attachment of the Amber rajputs to him. They were ready to lay down their lives for the personal protection of Akbar and the honour of the mughal throne. The rajput soldiers surpassed the others in their martial qualities—undaunted courage, chivalry and loyalty to their master. Hitherto the rajputs had been the most dreaded foes of the muslim rulers in India. By according a friendly treatment to them and paying due regard to their sense of honour and self-respect, Akbar won over their love and services beyond all contemplations. They, who once constituted 'the sword-arm of Hindustan' and stood as a bulwark against the muslim invaders,

were ready to act as 'the props and supports' of the mughal crown. This new revelation prompted Akbar to adopt a rational approach to the problem of his relationships with his hindu subjects, in general, and the rajputs, in particular." Akbar was formally the head of an Islamic state in India from which the hindus were kept at an arm's length. They suffered from numerous socio-religious disabilities and were denied full rights of citizenship, at par with the muslims, although they constituted the bulk of the population. They were treated as nonentity in the matters of state policy. The entire political and military power of the mughal state belonged to the muslims, and unfortunately, Akbar had had a very bitter experience at their hands. His father had suffered at the hands of his muslim rivals and, particularly, his brothers. The challenge to Akbar's authority came from within the ranks of his own nobility. He had to fight a life and death struggle against his kinsmen, disaffected nobles and self-seeking friends and associates, all of whom were muslims. Within their ranks, the mughal nobility constituted a house divided against itself; there was intense rivalry between the turko-afghans and the mughals, between the Chaghatais and the Uzbegs, between the Persians and all the rest. The dominant majority of the *sunnis* did not see eye to eye with the *shias*, The considerations of race and religion all paled into insignificance in his grim struggle for survival as the sovereign ruler. Akbar was all the time worried about the safeguarding of his interests against the aggressive tendencies and encroachments of his own people. In the rajputs he found at once an alternative source of authority for himself, a counter force against his selfish kinsmen and turbulent mughal nobles. Guided by his happy experience with the rajputs of Amber, Akbar formulated an intelligent and well-calculated rajput policy to befriend and subjugate all the rajput states, without interfering in their internal affairs. The cardinal principles of his policy were 'enlightened self-interest, recognition of merit, justice and fairplay'. based on honourable and equitable treatment with the rajputs. His plan was to bring the rajputs into the mainstream of national political life under the leadership of the mughal dynasty. He wanted the rajputs to serve as his righthandmen for the protection of his throne and the defence of the mughal empire. In the long run, he successfully utilised their services for the fulfilment of his imperialist policy, viz; to bring about the political unification of the country.

Akbar stretched out his hand of friendship to the rajputs from a position of strength. He adopted 'a carrot and rod policy' to bring them under his subjugation; so to say, he held a flower in one hand and a sword in the other. Some of them who willingly submitted to him were absorbed into 'the imperial system' while most of them stood guard against him, and were given opportunities to measure their swords with him on the battlefield and draw their own conclusions. As a matter of fact, Akbar was himself

eager to prove his mettle in the war so as to convince the brave rajputs of the sincerity of his clarion call. He carried on relentless warfare against the defiant rajputs until they were compelled to acknowledge his military prowess and overlordship. Akbar came in contact with three categories of the rajput states and its people. The first category was represented by the rajputs of Amber, Bikaner and Jaisalmer, who voluntarily offered their submission to him and were forthwith absorbed in the imperial system. The second category of the rajput states comprised those like Ranthambhore and Merta which offered dignified resistance but, ultimately, made an amicable settlement with Akbar on the receipt of honourable treatment, and were assimilated into the mainstream of national life as partners in the imperial enterprise. The third category of the rajputs were represented by Rana Udaya Singh of Mewar and his allies who stubbornly refused to compromise their regional and tribal independence, dignity and self-respect for any other consideration; of course, they contributed their 'own quota of strength and nobility of our national character'.[23] Akbar according to Tod, was the first successful conqueror of rajput independence, but generations of the martial races were cut off by his sword, and lustres rolled away ere his conquests were sufficiently confirmed.'[24] This constituted, however, but a part of his rajput policy. The second and the more important aspect of this policy was to heal the wounds of the vanquished and pacify their injured pride. Akbar was more generous and humane in his treatment towards the rajputs than all the other muslim rulers of India who preceded him. With the exception of his massacre of the civilian population at Chittor, for which Akbar made suitable amends, he never insulted or humiliated the vanquished rajput soldiers, nor persecuted the rajput subjects or ravaged their lands. In his 'reflections on Akbar's rajput policy', Ishwari Prasad records that 'Akbar was endowed with the higher qualities of statesmanship, and he resolved to basé his empire on the goodwill of both, hindus and muslims.'[25] Therefore, he adopted a policy of conciliation towards the hindus and did not treat them 'as inferiors' just because they happened to be *kafirs* or the 'infidels'. Akbar led vigorous military campaigns against the hindu rulers, but 'once they offered submission, he sheathed his sword with pleasure.'

The participation of rajputs in the process of political unification of the country and national integration proved beneficial from many angles. As they constituted the socio-political leadership of the hindus, they readily secured the support and goodwill of the latter for the mughal throne. It was primarily because of the rajput association with the political power structure that the hindu masses became reconciled to the mughal imperialism and wished for its welfare. Moreover, the rajput princes were great patrons of art and literature. They not only appreciated but also wholeheartedly supported Akbar's state enterprises for the socio-cultural advancement of their people. Their participation imparted strength to the

imperial armies and added to the magnificence of the imperial mughal court which became famous throughout Asia and Europe. The rajputs were instrumental in bringing about the synthesis of religions and cultures of the land. They indentified their interests with Akbar and the men of his school of thought who stood for national integration and secularism; they adopted the muslim ideas of social and political organisation, and thus facilitated national integration between hindus and muslims.

4: Akbar as National Ruler—An Assessment

Akbar was the first national monarch of medieval India. An imperialist by instinct, he imparted a political philosophy to his military campaigns and aggressive warfare. The political unification of the country and the establishment of an all-powerful central government with a uniform system of administration throughout the land were the ideals of his life. Though foreigner in blood, Akbar was every inch an Indian who like the ancient imperial rulers of India, had developed a firm faith in the principle of *one country, one government, and one people*. Therefore, regionalism, racialism or religious considerations were totally superseded by the national sentiments in his scheme of conquests. To the good fortune of the Indians he achieved a substantial measure of success in his efforts. Akbar granted complete religious freedom to his subjects, threw open the gates of imperial services to all without discrimination, and utilised the resources of the state for the welfare and happiness of his people. According to an opinion, 'Akbar was so great because he was so thoroughly Indianised. His genius perceived the possibilities, and his courage undertook the task of welding the two communities—hindus and muslims, into a common nation by the universal bond of common service and equal citizenship of a magnificent empire.'[26]

Akbar was an innovator in the field of administration. He laid the foundations of an imperial structure of administration under which the country was successfully governed by his descendants for over a century after his death. He was a constructive genius, and a man of courage and conviction who boldly struck down many a time-honoured custom and tradition which did not appeal to reason. He discarded the Islamic theory of kingship and declared himself the impartial national ruler of the country; he abolished *jaziya* in the teeth of opposition from the muslim nobility and *ulama* and introduced a rational system of taxation. He gave birth to the modern Indian provinces, called *subahs*, and introduced uniform system of provincial and local government and administration throughout the country. This system served the needs of the local and provincial states which came into existence on the ruins of the mughal empire in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Akbar revolutionised the entire civil-cum-military administration

by the promulgation of the *mansabdari* system and carried out extensive experimentation with the land-revenue settlement which resulted in the evolution of the *Rhyotwari* (*riyatwari*) system under the *Ain i Dah Salah*. Through intelligent and efficient organisation of the police, judiciary and local administration, Akbar restored perfect law and order in his dominions and earned the gratitude of his subjects. Akbar abolished *sati*, prohibited infanticide and child marriage, and made a very courageous attempt for the eradication of socio-religious evils from the society through statutory measures. His administrative achievements form the subject-matter of the next chapter.

Akbar identified himself completely with the land and its people and did his best to impart a socio-cultural unity to the empire. Persian as court language was compulsory for recruitment to the imperial civil services; Akbar also popularised it as the literary language of the intelligentsia—both hindus and muslims. The translation department of the imperial government rendered into Persian ancient Indian scriptures, including the *Vedas*, *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, and other Sanskrit literature. Arabic and Turki literature was also translated into Persian to make it available to the scholars of all communities. Liberal patronage was extended to scholars of all languages and religious communities; free studentships were given to the hindus in the state-owned *madrassas*. Akbar granted *madad i muash* to hindu teachers and writers of note, bestowed *jagirs* on them, created endowments for temples associated with their educational institutions. He patronised Sanskrit, Hindi and regional languages and literature in general; Urdu, the offspring of Persian and Hindi, also received due attention from the monarch though its use was confined to rank and file of the society during his days.

The age of Akbar has rightly been defined as the period of renaissance in the field of Hindi literature. During his age flourished *Sant* Tulsi Dass, the celebrated author of *Ram Charit Manas* or the *Tulsi Ramayana*. Tulsi Dass never visited the court of Akbar although some of his nobles, including Raja Man Singh and Mirza Abdur Rahim *Khan i Khana* were his disciples and admirers. As a matter of fact, an atmosphere of freedom and security provided by Akbar's benign rule produced a stimulating effect on all the intellectual activities of the times.

Akbar was a great patron of art and architecture. He took keen interest in the planning of palaces, mosques, tombs, forts and even the new townships. He had his own ideas about the construction of buildings by the free amalgamation of the turko-afghan and indigenous styles; it resulted in the evolution of what was called the mughal architecture which was, in fact, the national Indian architecture of that age. Akbar created an elaborate public works department for undertaking the construction of public buildings, gardens,

roads, *serias*, wells and canals. The peace and prosperity of his reign encouraged migration of the people to the towns, and the rapid urbanisation of the habitats necessitated the introduction of town-planning rules and regulations by the state. Akbar was also a great lover of fine arts, including calligraphy, painting, music, dancing and the like; he nationalised all these arts by extending liberal patronage to the artists of all communities and races, and by encouraging them to evolve out new forms by complete synthesis of foreign and indigenous traits. The art of painting was thought to be un-Islamic *albeit* Akbar put it 'on a safe and strong footing by removing the stigma of sacrilege attached to it'.[27] Akbar gave the first definite impulse to what afterwards came to be known as the Mughal School of Painting. Mir Sayyad Ali of Tabriz and Khwaja Abdus Samad, the two master artists of the muslim world, flourished at the court of Akbar. The masters of other fine arts such as the ornamental artists, gilders and line-drawers were also given employment and encouraged to pursue their arts with devotion. Likewise, Akbar was very fond of music, instrumental as well as vocal; Abul Fazl gives a list of thirty-six principal musicians of the imperial court, headed by Tansen of Gwalior, a singer 'like whom had not been born in India for the last thousand years.'[28] Akbar provided opportunities and inspiration to such like gems to enrich the socio-cultural life of the nation by their invaluable contributions; he was like a sun round which a galaxy of patriotic and capable warriors, statesmen, administrators, scholars, saints, renowned masters of various arts and crafts, and pioneers in every walk of socio-cultural life revolved in perfect harmony, and brought lustre and glory to the country as a whole. Akbar strove every nerve to work for the moral and material welfare of his people. Akbar was no doubt the real founder and organiser of the Mughal Empire which he transformed into the Nation-State of India by utilising its resources for the happiness and prosperity of all of its people. He was the greatest monarch of medieval India and one of the most celebrated rulers known to history.

Notes :

1. M.L. Roychoudhury, *The Din i Ilahi or the Religion of Akbar*, University of Calcutta, 1941, p. 49.
2. *Baburnama* (Beveridge), II.
3. Zainul Abidin (1420-70), the ruler of Kashmir, acted as the forerunner of Akbar in this regard. He granted complete religious freedom to the hindus who constituted the majority of his subjects in the valley. He abolished *jaziya*, banned the slaughter of cows, and extended liberal patronage to Sanskrit language and literature.—For details refer to *Volume One* of this study, pp. 264-65.
4. Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, II, pp. 203-4.
5. According to the lunar calendar, Akbar attained the age of twenty on April 10, 1562, before he stopped the practice of enslaving the prisoners of war.

6. Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, III, p. 433.
7. *ibid.*, III, p. 157.
8. *ibid.*, III, pp. 158-59.
9. *ibid*, p. 158.
10. *ibid.*
11. *ibid.*, III, p. 330.
12. *Mahzar* means pronouncement, declaration or an opinion; secondly, it also implies 'petition', the sense in which Mubarak used it.
13. The Mahzar was signed by Makhdum ul Mulk and Abdun Nabi also although they were known to be bitter critics of Akbar's liberal religious policy; obviously, their signatures must have been obtained by the emperor under pressure.
14. Rise and Fall of the Mughal Empire, *op. cit*, pp. 252-53.
15. S.M. Jaffar, The Mughal Empire, *op. cit*, p. 123.
16. *ibid.*
17. Badaoni, *Muntakhab ut Tawarikh*, *op. cit*, II, pp. 266-67.
18. *Zaminbos* was introduced in India by Balban, and *pabos* was also one of the court customs of the sultans of Delhi. It is said that Islam Shah Sur, the son and successor of Sher Shah Sur, 'would not be satisfied till he had received homage to his shoes by the noblemen of his court.'—R.P. Tripathi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, Allahabad, 1936, p. 61.
19. The Din i Ilahi, *op. cit*, p. 235.
20. Probably Mohsin Fani, who wrote the book long after the death of Akbar, in the forties of the seventeenth century; it has been written in the form of dialogues between the religious divines and the philosopher of the author's imagination. According to the author, his source of information was one Mirza Shah Muhammad, son of Mirza Baigh Khan, who had received information directly from Azam Khan, a prominent officer of Akbar and member of the *Din i Ilahi*.
21. Pers. text, NK Press, Lucknow, 1904; Eng. trs. by Shea & Troyer, 3 vols; Oriental Translation Fund, London, 1843.
22. *ibid*, I, pp. 94-95.
23. S.R. Sharma, Mughal Empire, *loc. cit*, pp. 170-71.
24. Tod, Rajasthan, *loc. cit*, I p. 338.
25. Ishwari Prasad, A Short History of the Muslim Rule in India, *op. cit*, p. 334.
26. K.T. Shah, *The Splendour That was India*, Bombay, 1932, p. 30.
27. S.M. Jaffar, *Some Cultural Aspects of Muslim Rule in India*, Peshawar, 1939, pp. 130-31.
28. Abul Fazl, *Ain i Akbari*, I, p. 682.

Chapter 11

Heydays of Medieval Indian Society

(*March 15, 1564 to April 1, 1679*)

1: The Logic of Chronological Demarcation

The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines the term 'society' as 'any social community' or 'association of persons united by a common aim or interest or principle'; more broadly speaking, it refers to the 'social mode of life' the customs and organisation of a *civilised nation*' (italics mine). Of all the living beings, *homo sapien* is the only 'social' and 'culture-bearing animal' whose 'behaviour is almost entirely learned and socially transmitted.'[1] Thus a herd of cattle do not make a society nor do a wolf and the lamb. So also, it is our contention that, within the social groups of the *homo sapiens*, an aggressor and the aggrieved, a victor and the vanquished, or a master and the slave do not make a *civilised* or *advanced* society irrespective of what the Plato's *Republic* or the modern anthropologists and the sociologists may have to say on the subject. For a person brought up in the democratic spirit of the twentieth century, the very thought of a *civilised society* brings to mind a sense of 'national and social unity', 'wholeness and harmony' and 'humanity in the blending and fusion of the conflicting assumptions, beliefs, traditions and values of life.'[2] That is why the use of the term 'society' in this study is qualified. India had a highly advanced and flourishing society before the aggressive onslaught of the muslim invaders, which may be called the pre-muslim Indian society or the hindu society because the hindus then constituted the Indian nation for all intents and purposes. The thirteenth century, which saw the loss of national independence by the hindus and the establishment of the foreign turkish rule in Delhi, was marked by a serious political as well as socio-cultural conflict between the exotic and indigenous forces. The net outcome of the struggle was the plantation of muslims as a social group in the heart of the hindu society. The hindus were deprived of political and religious freedom and made to suffer from numerous other social and economic disabilities under the sultanate of Delhi. They

were treated as *zimmis* or the second-class citizens of the 'Islamic state'. This alienation of the government and the new ruling elite from the indigenous political and cultural traditions halted the progress of the hindu society and crippled its socio-cultural faculties beyond all repairs. Of course, by the beginning of the fourteenth century, interaction between the two diverse forces helped in the emergence of a new social order in northern India, called the Indo-Muslim society *albeit* the hindus constituted but unwilling and unequal partners in its evolution. They were, under forced circumstances, yoked to the exotic culture, patronised by the alien government, backed by its men-at-arms. Hindus and muslims thus formed two unequal and asymmetrical wheels of a coach of the Indo-Muslim social order which could not make the latter run smoothly. Berghe, a renowned sociologist, observes that 'when religion is linked with political hegemony, it frequently becomes the source of bloody conflicts. Since political power is legitimised in religious terms, it follows that those who do not share the religious beliefs of the sovereign are not only heretics but potential traitors. Political loyalty is defined in terms of religious conformity.[3] If swearnig on the Quran alone is made the test of truthfulness in court, for instance, by implication, buddhists or hindus are beyond the pale. The hindus were at a disadvantage in their cultural relationships with the muslims from yet another angle. Hinduism was not a missionary faith; it was 'not a creed like Christianity or Islam but a way of life' of the Indians; therefore, 'the idea of proselytism was totally foreign' to it. On the other hand, Islam was 'universalistic' in its outlook according to which all people are equally eligible to adopt the tenets of the sole true faith and to achieve eternal salvation. Therefore, the true believer must work towards the conversion of infidels until the whole of humanity embraces the true faith'.[4] Berghe further argues that

> "The ideal of universal human brotherhood preached by proselytising religions has often been contrasted with their extraordinary intolerance and brutality in practice. There, too, the paradox is only apparent. Although proselytising faiths accept the admissibility of all, they also proclaim a monopoly of truth, which relegates those not in the fold to the status of infidels, valuable only as potential converts. As military conquest is the swiftest way of spreading a religion, it is little wonder that the sword and the cross, the crescent, or whatever should so often go together."[5]

Berghe opines that few militant sects have achieved marked and lasting success through patient and peaceful preaching'; 'had Islam not taken to the sword, it could not have swept enormous regions of the globe with lightning rapidity.'[6]

The invidiousness between the hindus and muslims, the two constituents of the Indo-Muslim society of the early medieval

period, was removed by Akbar the Great in 1564 when he granted rights of equal citizenship to all of his subjects irrespective of religious, racial or regional considerations. The fifteenth of March 1564 was a red-letter day in the socio-cultural history of medieval India, when he abolished *jaziya* and liberated the hindus from various religious, social and economic disabilities. He initiated a policy of recruitment to the imperial services on merit and secured the goodwill as well as participation of the hindus in the consolidation and expansion of the mughal empire. It was this fact which accorded equal status and full dignity to the two constituents of the Indo-Muslim social order and provided opportunities and incentives for its healthy growth and development as a compact Indian society worth the name. It flourished for over a century and a half un il Aurangzeb cried a halt to the process of socio-cultural development and national integration by the reimposition of *jaziya* on the hindus on April 2, 1679. Salient features of the medieval Indian society with a glimpse of the strides made by it in the fields of education, art and architecture may be given.

2: Salient Features of Medieval Indian Society

Indianisation of the Foreign Immigrants

The medieval Indian society was religion-dominated *albeit*, from the social and cultural points of view, the barriers between the two major religious communities—hindus and muslims, had broken down and all of them behaved as typical Indians. Akbar's period of rule was glorified by the triumph of nationalism over the proces of reaction, including communalism, racialism, regionalism and other divisive tendencies. The process of Indianisation of the once foreign immigrants—arabs, persians, turks and mongols was almost complete by the end of the sixteenth century. We do not want to enter into an argument as to what constituted an India and what did not; it is sufficient to say that all those who had adopted India as their country of permanent abode and those who were born and bread on its soil and loved their land of birth were Indians. India was the land of their hopes and aspirations. This feeling of Indianness was acquired by them as a social heritage from their homes, villages and towns and through the conscious political and social policies adopted by the mughal emperors--Akbar Jahangir and Shah Jahan. It instilled in them a 'sense of identification with India' and impelled them to place their 'loyalty to the nation group above loyalty to every other group, religious, scoial, linguistic or political' to which they might belong.[7] The Indians of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries displayed a unique sense of socio-cultural unity in diversity which was taken note of by the European writers of the age though they could not find adequate words to explain it. The Indians, irrespective of whether they were hindus or muslims, could be singled out from among the inhabitants of other countries because of their peculiar way of life

which imparted them 'a distinctive individuality' of which the Indians themselves were also conscious. Dubois emphasises 'the pervading unity of Indian social strands' of the early eighteenth century, when the Mughal empire was on its decline, in the following words:

> "There is no place in India which does not possess certain customs and pratices of its own, and it would be impossible to give description of them all. Fundamentally, however,... there is a certain general uniformity of rule and practice in everyday social matters which compels one to look upon the different masses of the population as belonging in reality to one big family."[8]

Feudal Society

The medieval Indian society was organised on a feudal basis. The emperor, as the absolute ruler, was the head of the social system. He claimed divine status and powers for the crown and asserted proprietary rights over the entire land in his capacity as the lord paramount of the country. Members of the royal family together with the blood relations, friends and favourites of the king enjoyed privileged position in the society while the imperial *harem* and the court acted as the trend-setters in social and cultural affairs. As for instance, Nur Jahan, the First Lady of the Realm, set the standards in socio-cultural values for the aristocracy of her times. She was treated as a model of fashion who revolutionised male and female dresses, and brought about innovations in the design of gold and silver ornaments, household furnishings and decorations and what not. She enhanced the beauty of the imperial court, prescribed elegant dresses for the courtiers and added to the grandeur and magnificence of the *darbar*. The world of fashion owes the invention of the otto of roses either to Nur Jahan or to her illustrious mother. From aristocratic and aesthetic points of view, Nur Jahan imparted a fairy's touch to the court and transformed the awe-inspiring men-in-arms into impressive personalities of the most elegant yet invincible warriors of a dream-land. These socio-cultural trends were faithfully imitated by the provincial courts of the governors, the mughal nobility and the aristocracy all over the country.

The Aristocracy

The mughal nobility or the ruling elite, collectively styled as *umara* (pl. of *amir*), who belonged to the first category of the *mansab-dari* system, and the feudatory chieftains, who owed allegiance to the mughal crown, comprised the aristocracy of the land. The latter were also graded as *mansabdars* with a view to determining their dignity and status in the imperial court as well as the society, of course, 'there was little honour or dignity outside the imperial service, and every talented youth aspired to join it.'[9] The aristocracy

was composed of muslims as well as hindus alike although the number of the latter was small because of the delayed entry into its fold and the slow process of Indianisation. As mentioned earlier, the rajputs who constituted the socio-political leadership of the hindus, became partners in the imperial enterprise of the Great Mughals and strengthened the forces of national and cultural integration. The rajput princes were great patrons of art and literature who worked for the socio-cultural advancement of the people. They imparted indigenous touch to the mughal court and influenced the standard of living and way of life of the mughal aristocracy in general. The medieval Indian aristocracy rolled in wealth and enjoyed luxurious lives The law of escheat forbade economy among the nobility because, according to this practice, they held their offices, titles, and the priviliges attached thereto, for life only, and were not allowed to pass on their material wealth and properity in heritage to their descendants or successors. Accordingly, they felt tempted to spend as much and as quickly as they could. They maintained huge *harems*, built big mansions, reared up herds of elephants, horses and cattle, and kept armies of domestic servants, dancing girls and slaves. The prestigious personal establishment, once developed, could not be cut to size thereafter and, in the run, many of the *mansabdars* found it difficult to live within their means. There was no scope for thrift in their life-style, and they, usually overdrew from the royal treasury or borrowed heavily from other sources. It ultimately led to the deterioration of character and martial qualities of the *mansabdars* who constituted the steel-frame of the mughal empire. Their demoralisation adversely affected the discipline and standard of efficiency of their military contingents which became one of the major causes of decay and downfall of the mughal empire. Even otherwise, no foreigner in the service of the government, was permitted to take away his hoarded wealth from India. The medieval Indian aristocracy made lavish use of imported goods of all sorts, including even the fruits which were brought from Bukhara and Samarqand. Ice was used in summer even though it sold for ten *dams* per *seer*.[10] Akbar's own imperial *harem* was peopled by 5,000 women, including his numerous mistresses, dancing girls, maid-servants, female guards and a staff of women officers who looked after its management.[11] No wonder, the nobility followed in the foot-prints of their imperial patrons. In spite of their extravagance and general weakness for wine and women, the nobility of the mughals 'was a remarkable institution which welded into a homogeneous and harmonious whole men belonging to different regions and tribes, speaking different languages and professing different religions and with different cultural traditions. The mughals succeeded in imbuing the nobles with a sense of common purpose and loyalty to the reigning dynasty and in imparting to them a distinctive cultural outlook, and in creating traditions of high efficiency and endeavour in administration. It was thus a definite factor in securing for a century and a half a remarkable degree of unity and good government in the country."[12]

The Middle Class

The middle class, though extensive, was heterogeneous in character. It was composed of junior *mansabdars*, middle-level civil and judicial hierarchy, big landlords, merchants, bankers and professional men, including the priests, men of letters, and artists. The feudal lords 'constituted the dominant material group and possession of land was, therefore, a positive source of status in the society'. Social stratification of the hindus being based on the hereditary caste system, only the prosperous and influential among the high-borns found their way into the middle class. Nevertheless, the muslims also tended to determine social status on the basis of birth and racial considerations. Thus in Bengal and Bihar we notice two main social divisions among them, styled as *ashraf* or 'the high-born' and *razil*—'the disgraced' or 'the low born', on the pattern of the hindu caste system. 'The *ashrafs* constituted the gentry or classes which claimed high extraction, having abundance of pride They included the *sheikhs* and *sayyads*, *mughals* and *pathans*, corresponding to the *brahmins* and *kshatriyas* of the hindu society. They considered it disgraceful to do menial work and engage in lower professions.'[13] The middle class, in general, was very well off but not extravagant; unlike the aristocracy, it was free from ostentation. The junior *mansabdars* and the middle-level mughal bureaucracy 'felt no pinch' and 'passed their days merrily even during the last years of Aurangzeb's reign when there was widespread economic distress in the country'. The businessmen and bankers, most of whom were hindus, usually concealed their wealth and pretended not to be rich lest they might be fleeced by the unscrupulous and corrupt bureaucrats. Bernier tells us that 'whatever the profits of trade, the commercial class lived in a state of studied indigence'. Of course, the big bankers and merchants, engaged in the maritime trade on the western coast of India, exhibited their riches unhesitatingly and enjoyed a high standard of living, usually rubbing shoulders with the top-level ruling elite.

The Masses

The aristocracy and the middle class collectively formed not more than ten to fifteen per cent of the entire population of India; therefore, the bulk of the people, irrespective of their religious denominations, comprised the masses or the lower classes. They included among them the peasantry—small peasant proprietors as well as the agricultural labour, soldiers, artisans craftsmen, shop-keepers, rank and file among the government servants, menials, slaves and millions of the self-employed persons. The poorer among the caste hindus and the whole lot of *shudras* and outcastes, irrespective of their material possessions, fell into the category of the masses. Some sections of the masses were economically well off and they lived happy and contented lives *albeit*, on the whole, their life was hard because of wide disparity in the distribution of wealth. The

general standard of living of the Indian masses was very low and their wants were few. Much clothing was not needed due to warm and salubrious climate in many parts of India but even otherwise the people made bare minimum use of garments. Woollen clothes were practically unknown to the masses while the shoes were not much in use in some parts of the country. However, there was no scarcity of food except in times of drought and famines and the prices were very low; therefore, deaths by starvation under normal circumstances were not known. Agriculture flourished, the state demand was fixed and the peasants usually had enough to spare. The government officials were not allowed to charge the farmer in excess of the state demand. There was no intermediary *jagirdar* or contractor to deprive the peasant of the rightful fruit of his plough. Great interest was taken by the state in the welfare of the cultivators. In times of drought or famine, land revenue was remitted and, instead, substantial relief was given to the peasants. *Takavi* loans were advanced to them to tide over the difficulties. The cultivators were fairly compensated for the damage done to their crops during the march of the armies. It was only during the concluding years of Shah Jahan's reign that the condition of the peasantry began to show signs of deterioration because of excessive state demands and fall in the standard of administrative efficiency.

Family Life: Position of Women

Polygamy was almost universal among the aristocracy and upper middle classes—hindus and muslims alike. The hindus, in general, practised monogamy *albeit* even the poorest of the poor muslim felt tempted to have up to four wives as permitted by the Islamic law; it was encouraged by the muslim religious leaders, particularly, to multiply their numbers. Divorce (*talaq*) and remarriage were common among the muslims but the hindus abhored these practices. On the other hand, they resorted to infanticide and encouraged the practice of *sati* to get rid of their family and social liabilities towards the dependent females. Child marriage was common among both the communities. The ruling elite and upper middle classes maintained large *harems* of 'female establishments', containing numerous wives, mistresses, dancing girls, maid-servants. Sale and purchase of slave girls was a lucrative trade and eunuchs were also freely made and sold like cattle; their services were needed to keep a watch over the *harems* and protect the lives and property of their masters. An Indian woman was completely dependent upon the male members of her family from her birth till death, from her father, brothers and husband to her sons and even other male elders of the family. Her place was within the four walls of her house. Mohammad Yasin sums up the general condition of the muslim woman in medieval India as follows:

"The system of *pardah* was strictly observed and no decent women came out in public except clothed in *burqa*, and that too very rarely. Only poor women went on foot. Those of quality, they were usually carried in covered coaches, especially in *palkies*. The muslim jealousy about their wives was proverbial and even near relations were not allowed to have a look on the fair damsels of the family. The houses were built with high walls and no dwelling place could be constructted in a particular locality overlooking others; Scrupulous regard was shown to the privacy of the women's apartment and no one could enter into it without formally making his arrival known. Even the sight of an undressed women was avoided."[14]

Of course, within her household, a muslim woman enjoyed a position of great respect and dignity; she was treated as 'an honour of the family and no sacrifice was thought too great to maintain it.' We have it on the testimony of Badaoni and other contemporary writers that 'the veiled carriage of females was sacred all over the country and nobody dared challenge it'. The muslim women were given religious education; they learnt the Quran by rote memory and usually lived devoted lives. Some of them learnt to transcribe the Quran. Nevertheless, 'the muslim community of Hindustan', writes Yasin, 'suffered more from the evils of polygamy and female seclusion in medieval times than in the present age. Polygamy was a luxury of the rich and a liability thoughtlessly incurred even by men of poorer means. The household of a great *amir* was a veritable stud for multiplying the human species, and in spite of all their care to bring up their sons, the race was bound to degenerate.'[15]

The position of hindu women was comparatively better than that of their muslim counterparts although normally their duties were also confined to the maintenance of the household and rearing up of their children. Higher education and social freedom enjoyed by them earlier suffered a setback in the medieval age. Nevertheless hindu women, moved about freely and took part in the socio-religious and cultural activities of the society in association with their menfolk although upper stratum of the hindus had perforce to adopt the custom of seclusion for their ladies to protect them from the gaze of those amongst whom the social freedom of women was unknown.

General Life

There was no uniformity in the food-habits of the Indians. The hindus were mostly vegetarians while the muslims were usually meat-eaters. The country was rich in agricultural products, including wheat, rice, barley, maize, gram and other cereals and pulses. The inhabitants of Indo-Gangetic valley were wheat-eaters whereas

those of the south were fond of fish and rice. Milk and milk products formed an important part of the Indian diet which was enriched by various types of sweets and sweet dishes prepared out of cereals and milk, such as *laddoos*, *jalebies*, *halwa*, rice pudding, *barfi*, *qalaqand* and *rasogolas*. *Lassi* made out of sour milk was a popular drink. Spices, butter, ghee and cheese were used extensively in cooking. *Nan and kabab* were favourite with the meat-eaters *albeit* beef was a taboo for the hindus while the muslims abhorred pork.

The aristocracy and middle classes of medieval India were known to be the best-dressed people of the world with a very high standard of living. The Indian textile industry was highly developed and it made use of cotton, wool as well as silk for the production of cloth of many shades and hues for men's wear and household furnishings. The skilled Indian craftsmen produced a rich variety of material for use by the aristocracy; it included among other things, bed-spreads, carpets, rugs (*gilims*), *namdas* and mosquito curtains. Akbar paid special attention towards the expansion and development of the state-owned *karkhanas*; he effected great improvement in the carpet-making industry as a result of which 'wonderful varieties and charming textiles' were manufactured 'which were as good as those made in Turkey or Persia.'[16] Indian dress differed from place to place and from class to class. As mentioned earlier, clothing of the Indian masses was scanty. Dress of the hindus consisted of two pieces of broad unstitched cloth, one of which was used as *dhoti* or under-garment and the other was wrapped over the shoulders to cover the upper part of the body. The muslims used shirts and trousers when they moved out of their homes but othewise preferred to go about with a single piece of unstitched cloth, called *lungi*; it differed from *dhoti* only in its style of being tied to the waist. Turban or a cap was the common headgear of the Indians. The commoners made do with a loin-cloth in the south because of hot climate. On the whole, the muslims were better dressed than the hindus; sometimes they used long upper-garment, called *qaba*, and put on *dagla*, made of wool, in winter, while the *ulama* wore large turbans and long sleeved tunics. Similarly, the well-to-do hindus put on a sort of jacket, called *angika*, with long sleeves. The dress of hindu women consisted of a *sari* and *choli* or bodice with short sleeves in the towns whereas the village folk preferred a *lahanga*—'a long and loose skirt' and *chola*; of course, the ladies' wear were in bright shining colours enriched with beautiful prints and embroidery. The muslim women preferred close-fitting trousers, shirt and a long scarf or thin cap to cover their head. The hindu ladies invariably covered their head with a limb of their *sari* or a scarf. *Burqa*, usually black in colour, was an out-door wear for the muslim ladies while some of the muslim nobles wore a *kula* or 'a long tartar conical cap' in place of a turban as their head dress. The use of ornaments and jewellery as physical adornment according to their status and financial condition

was common in both the sexes and they also made liberal use of flowers, scents and various types of costumes to add to their charm.

Religion and Society

Religion permeated every aspect of the medieval Indian society. The country was dotted with mosques, temples and other places of worship erected by the people belonging to various religious denominations; the whole of India from the Himalayan peaks to Kanyakumari in the south seemed to be a holy land. The foreigners who visited the country during the mughal period were simply wonderstruck to see 'the passion of people for their creed' who built their places of worship everywhere. The princes emptied their purses and the commoners poured out the entire savings of their lives to get them built while the poor and the destitute dedicated their whole lives in the construction of these holy places without remuneration. The hindus thronged their places of pilgrimage in millions while the muslims undertook Ramzan fast en masse and went on *Haj* or pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina in hundreds. Similarly the Parsees never allowed 'the holy fire' of their temples to be put out. Religion exercised a profound influence over the minds of Indians and moulded their entire life-style and character. Sectarianism was a striking feature of the religious life of Indians; each one of the religions had branched off into numerous sects and sub-sects representing considerable variations in their religious beliefs and practices. Hinduism was plagued by many sub-sects of *shaivites*, *vaishnavites*, *tantrics* besides a few progressive sects of the *bhakti* reformers, one of which led to the birth of Sikhism. Similarly the muslims were divided into *shias*, *sunnis* and *bohras* besides the followers of various *sufi* orders. The lessons of *bhakti* reformers and *sufi* saints seemed to have been lost on the bulk of the nation although asceticism was credited with religious merit and hindu *sadhus*, *vairagis*, *yogis*, *sannyasis*, naked ascetics, jain *munis*, muslim *pirs* and *fakirs* comprised a considerable part of the population. Observance of wasteful ceremonies and rituals besides participation in the numerous fairs and festivals was deemed essential to purify the soul and seek redemption from sin. The priests had a firm hold over the social life of their devotees and many fake men of God and crooks in the garb of *yogis* exploited the poor and the ignorant masses. They encouraged all sorts of superstitions and blind practices, including the animal and human sacrifices on the altars of the deities. Because of the intensity of religious life, charity in the name of religion was always forthcoming in abundance. The big temples and mosques had large landed endowments attached to them, and the priests who controlled these holy places made their priesthood hereditary. They flourished on public donations and the income derived from the landed endowments, thus making religion a great feudal organisation with deep-rooted vested interests in landed property.

Fairs and Festivals

Indian social life was very colourful and busy; it was full of hustle and bustle because of numerous social functions and rituals, fairs and festivals most of which were accorded religious sanction. The hindus celebrated the festivals of *holi*, *basant-panchami*, *dussehra*, *diwali*, *shivratri* and *sankrant* with great zest and gusto while the muslims celebrated *idul-zuha*, *idul-fitr*, *shab-i-barat*, *muharram* and *miladun nabi*; most of these festivals were marked by public celebrations through processions, *jhankis*, accompanied by the beating of the drums, playing of music, fireworks, and the illumination of houses and places of worship. The *samadhis* of hindu ascetics and tombs of *sufis* also constituted the places a pilgrimage and religious congregations by the Indians, irrespective of their religious denominations. The banks of the Ganges from Kailash to the Bay of Bengal, and hundreds of places of pilgrimage spread all over the land thronged by millions of the hindus all through the year. These pilgrimages and festivals provided a pleasant diversion in the social life of the Indian masses; they gave impetus to the virtues of religious-mindedness, charity, benevolence, religious toleration and fellow-feelings, and inspired hilarity, feasting and social intercourse between hindus and muslims, high and low, on a large scale. They displayed unity of Indian national culture to the foreign visitors in unambiguous terms.

Apart from the religious festivities, Indians showed interest in manifold indoor and outdoor games, sports, amusements and pastimes. Hunting, horse-riding, polo, and elephant fights were popular outdoor sports of the princes and aristocracy while gambling and organisation of *mahfils* or musical concerts were the indoor pastimes; these were usually accompanied by *jashans* or the drinking bouts and sumptuous feasts. The commoners took delight in wrestling, pigeon-flying, cock-fights, bull-fights, ram-fights and gamblings. *Mujras* were organised to give public performance by the professional singers, dancing girls and actors; while the snake-charmers and *bajigars* and bards who moved from place to place provided entertainment to the village folk.

General Character, Etiquettes and Manners

The Indians of medieval age were by and large simple, honest and straightforward people who possessed high moral character and lived virtuous homely lives. In spite of the joint family system, because of which sometimes, three or four generations of a patriarch were herded together in a single house with a common kitchen in limited accommodation, they lived in peace and harmony with one another. Each member of the family or the community received due respect and affection from the others in accordance with his age or social status. The Indians had a very articulate and highly developed technique of social intercourse which elicited much praise from the foreign visitors; De Laet calls

them 'the past masters of good manners'.[17] Their methods of salutations, rules of conduct and etiquette, of courtesy and polity, of civility and polish in behaviour were well-established by the social conventions. They were known for their hospitality, charity and benevolence. They were respectful to the elders, religious priests, teachers, ascetics and superiors. They were very civil and modest in their conversation, and, to show respect to the elders, they kept their heads covered while in their presence. They seldom contested a point nor did they contradict the statement of their superiors. The Indians were by and large God-fearing and reserved by nature and conservative in their outlook. They kept their words; no written agreements weren eeded for their transactions in money and material. Verbal agreements were made and honoured, and money was borrowed and returned without written bonds; it was 'uncommon to find a debt contracted in privacy denied even in distress'. The agents of the businessmen were known to carry large sums of money hundreds of miles away from their headquarters to make purchases for their masters but they kept their accounts honestly and 'embezzlements were rare'. Malcolm observes that some weaknesses had crept into the Indian character because of the age-old 'misrule and oppression' of their 'feudal governments' but he asserts that he does not 'know the example of any great population, in similar circumstances, preserving through such a period of changes and tyrannical rule, so much of virtue and so many good qualities as are to be found in a great proportion of the inhabitants of this country.'[18]

Wealth and General Prosperity

Uninterrupted peace; freedom from foreign invasions and good government enriched the mughal treasury and ushered in an era of prosperity and material well-being for the people. Within this age, the period of thirty years' reign of Shah Jahan is, particularly, styled as 'the zenith' of prosperity and affluence of the medieval Indian society; his period of rule is sometimes referred to as the Golden Age of medieval Indian history and there are sound reasons to support this view. Moreland is all praise for the excellent financial administration of Shah Jahan which raised the income of the state 'beyond all precedents' without causing much strain on the peasantry. He calls Shah Jahan's reign 'a period of agrarian tranquillity'[19] during which the land revenue system of Raja Todar Mal (the finance minister of Akbar who introduced the famous *Ain i Dah salah* or the Rhyotwari System) was extended to the Deccan also. Elphinstone categorically states that 'Shah Jahan was the most magnificent prince that ever appeared in India. His retinue, his state establishments, his largesses and all the pomp of his court, were much increased beyond what they attained to under his predecessors. His expenses in these departments can only be palliated by the fact that they neither occasioned any increase to his exactions nor any embarrassment to his finances'.[20]

The unlimited and incalculable wealth possessed by the mughal emperors which dazzled the foreigners and left them spell-bound, was not collected by them through questionable means. The *great mughals* are known to have been spending lavishly and rather extravagantly but they did not run after money; they employed no Morton's fork to fleece their subjects. None of the mughal emperors is known to have extorted money and valuables from the indignant peasantry or businessmen and traders. The immense wealth of the mughal treasury represented the surplus revenues of the state collected through peaceful means and according to the law of the land. This wealth belonged to the nation as a whole while the mughal emperors and the *grandees* of the empire were its custodians; it is a different matter that neither the people nor their masters knew how to make the best use of it for more beneficial public activities. The wealth of the country was unevenly distributed; it was certainly concentrated in the hands of a microscopic minority.

3: Education and Learning

The imperial mughals were highly educated and cultured princes of their times who extended liberal patronage to education and learning. Their appreciation for educational and cultural values and the policy of religious tolerance and benevolence created a social environment which was highly conducive to the advancement of education and learning. Their period of rule witnessed almost a renaissance in the fields of ancient and medieval learning, brought about by the scholars of all races, religious communities and linguistic groups who flourished hand in glove with one another and enjoyed the royal patronage without discrimination. It was enough for a brilliant scholar to write a book or a chronicle to draw the attention of the reigning monarch or his nobles and thereby secure recognition as well as *madad i muash* for him and his family for the rest of his life. Babar was a scholar of Persian and Turki languages who is said to have invented a new style of verse in Persian, known as *mubaiyan*. His poems in Persian and diwan in Turki make an interesting reading and reveal his character as an imaginative man of letters. He has made his name immortal in the history of his literature by his memoirs, entitled *Tuzuki Baburi*, which constitutes a first-rate authority on his own career and the history of his times. It ranks among the world-famous biographical accounts of Gibbon and Newton as well as the *Confessions* of Rousseau and St. Augustine. Babar has rightly been called the Prince of Autobiographers who made his memoirs readable as well as authoritative by expressing his ideas clearly and honestly. *Tuzuk i Baburi* is a work of great literary merit. Humayun was well-read in Turki, Persian and Arabic languages; he showed special interest in religious studies, mathematics, astronomy and fine arts. Though a failure as a ruler and

administrator, he retained his literary taste till the very end of his life. A magnificent personal library was attached to his royal palace, called *Din Panah* or *Sher Mandal* in Delhi; he sustained injuries in an accidental fall while descending down the stairs of this library which cost him his life. Sher Shah Sur was not an educationist but he understood the value of education as a vehicle of socio-cultural development; he opened numerous *maktabs* and *madarssas* for the promotion of education and learning and awarded stipends to the scholars.

Akbar was the first among the muslim rulers of India who made a serious attempt to reform the educational system to suit the national aspirations of the people. As mentioned earlier, the Indo-Islamic system of education as introduced by the sultans of Delhi was based on orthodox Islamic concepts and was very limited in its scope. Its two-fold object was to produce priests for the propagation of Islam and bureaucracy to run the administration of the Islamic state in accordance with the *shara*. The hindus found no place in that educational system although some of them, called the *kayasthas*, had taken to the study of Persian to seek employment under the sultans. The traditional aim of the Indo-Islamic system of education carried no weight with Akbar who wanted to serve as a vehicle for national progress. Change in the educational policy of the state was necessitated by the grant of religious freedom to all the Indians and change in the nature of recruitment to the imperial bureaucracy which was made secular in personnel and functions. From a close scrutiny of Abul Fazl's monumental work, entitled *Akbarnama*, including the *Ain i Akbari*, we come to the conclusion that Akbar, though personally not interested in academic exercises, was fully conscious of the importance of education for the socio-cultural and material advancement of the people. He brought about five major reforms in the field of education. Firstly, he provided a secular base to it by making a distinction between the Arabic, and Persian studies. The Arabic studies which dealt almost exclusivley with the Islamic scriptures and theology were allowed to flourish as ever before *albeit* the curricula and scope of Persian studies were droad-based to include many secular subjects, including natural sciences and medical studies, to attract hindus and muslims alike. The study of Persian language and literature was popularised on an all-India basis. Secondly, Akbar expanded elementary education to raise the percentage of general literacy among the masses. He introduced a new curriculum of studies for the *maktabs* and suggested improved methods of instruction to the children. *Ain* 25 of the *Ain i Akbari*, which is devoted to the reorganisation of education, runs as follows:

> "In every country, but especially in Hindustan, boys are kept in school for years where they learn the consonants and vowels. A great portion of life of the students is wasted by making

them read many books. His Majesty orders that every school boy should first learn to write the letters of the alphabet and also learn to trace their several forms. He ought to learn the shape and name of each letter, which may be done in days; then the boy should proceed to write the joint letters. They may be practised for a week, after which the boy should learn some prose and poetry by heart, and commit to memory some verses in praise of God or moral sentences, each written separately. Care should be taken that he learns to understand everything himself but the teacher may assist him a little. He then ought for sometime, to be daily practised in writing a hemistick or a verse, and will soon acquire a current hand. The teacher ought especially to look after five things; knowledge of letters, meaning of words, the hemistick, the verse, the former lesson. If this method of teaching be adopted, a boy will learn in a month, or even in a day what it took others years to understand, so much that people will be quite astonished."[21]

Akbar prescribed subjects for higher studies in the *madarssas* some of which had never found their place in the curriculum of the muslim institutions before; his ordinance to this effect declares:

"Every boy ought to read books on morals, arithmetic, the notion peculiar to arithmetic, mensuration, geometry, astronomy, household matters, rules of government, medicine, logic, the *tibiy iilahi* sciences (philosophy and metaphysics) and history, all of which may be gradually acquired. In studying Sanskrit the students ought to learn *Vyakarna*, *Niyai*, *Vedanta* and *Patanjal* (*Yogadarshana* of Patanjali)."[22]

In the third place, Akbar made an attempt to secularise the teaching process itself by encouraging the hindus to join the ranks of Persian teachers in the state-run madrassas. It was really a revolutionary step the like of which could never be envisaged before his times. A.L. Srivastava has to say the following on this point:

One healthy change, a faint beginning of which was made in the time of Sikander Lodhi, continued during the reign of Akbar. It was that hindu students began to be admitted into the *maktabs* and *madrassas*.The result was that within half a century there was a large number of hindu scholars, historians and poets of Persian, and some of these excelled in rational sciences and were appointed teachers of the Persian language in the *madrassas*. There was thus a secular bias imparted to education in the time of Akbar."[23]

Fourthly, Akbar introduced the system of grants-in-aid to the educational institutions of the hindus also. He encouraged the muslim scholars to study Sanskrit and Hindi and translate the religious as well as secular literature of the hindus into Persian and

Arabic for the benefit of the muslims. Akbar extended liberal patronage to the intellectuals belonging to all religious communities and disciplines without discrimination. Most of these educational reforms were made possible only after 1580 when Akbar had eliminated the baneful influence of orthodox *sunni ulama* from the state politics. Before his times, education was treated as a part of the religious duties performed at state-level for the spread of Islam, and its organisation and managerial control were exclusivley in the hands of the orthodox *sunni ulama*. The chief *sadr* (*sadr us sadur*) of the empire, who was a cabinet minister incharge of the ecclesiastical department and religious endowments, held charge of the educational institutions as well. After the dismissal of Abdun Nabi as the chief *sadr* by Akbar all those who were appointed to this exalted office were liberal and secular in their religious outlook; they were put under obligations to sanction stipends and scholarships to all the scholars and grants to all the educational institutions. Thus the hindus also became entitled to receive a part of the funds under the charge of the chief *sadr* which were previously utilised for the spread of Islam and development of education and learning among the muslims alone. As a result of the impetus given by Akbar, the whole of the mughal empire was dotted with *maktabs* and *madrassas* and the advancement to education and learning continued unabated during the reign of his successors. Besides Delhi, Agra and Fatehpur Sikri, the provincial headquarters and other major towns became centres of Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit education; the rulingelite and the public, in general, made liberal contributions towards the establishment and management of these institutions. The mughal emperors built public libraries and displayed a passion for the acquisition of books, and encouraged their production and multiplication. Akbar surpassed all of the imperial mughals in this respect.[24] His imperial library at Agra had on its shelves, at the time of the emperor's death, more than 24,000 books, all in manuscript, 'written by great men, mostly by very ancient and serious authors'. Abul Fazl records:

> "His Majesty's library is divided into several parts; some of the books are kept within, and some without the *Harem*. Each part of the library is subdivided, according to the value of the books and the estimation in which the sciences were held, of which the books treat. Prose books, poetical works, Hindi, Persian, Greek, Kashmirian, Arabic, are all separately placed. In this order they are also inspected."[25]

These books were adorned with attractive and costly buildings, in many cases enriched with beautiful illustrations by the best artists; of course, these were worth millions.[26] Abul Fazl informs us that the imperial library at Agra included 4300 choice manuscripts which had been transferred from the personal library of his elder brother Faizi, the poet laureate, after his death in 1595

A.D.[27] The educational institutions, mosques, *khanqahs* and hindu temples were the places where the books were usually preserved; [8] that is why the historians of the day do not say much about the libraries of the period. As emphasised by us in the second volume of this study, historiography itself constituted one of the most popular branches of learning and a major occupation for the ambitious scholars, eager to secure royal favours. It attracted the attention of the writers primarily as an art rather than a science. The art of medieval Indian historiography reached its perfection during the reign of Akbar under whose liberal patronage the Indian scholars, hindus and muslims both, 'cherished and cultivated' it as a full-fledged discipline in its own right. The mughal emperors employed chroniclers, diarists and court historians who maintained profuse records of the royal performance in systematic and chronological order, though usually exaggerated. The scholars wrote not only for literary fame, reward or edification of their patrons but also to satiate their intellectual hunger and inner urge for writing their observations and experiences.

Akbar's reign is also notable for the introduction of *maqulat* or rational sciences as a subject of study in the *madrassas* and encouragement to industrial and technical education in the state-run *karkhanas*. This step was taken by Akbar on the advice of Mir Fathullah Shirazi, a Persian scholar and scientist who excelled in all branches of *maqulat*, including physics, chemistry and mechanics. He was an expert in the art of metallurgy. He had come to Bijapur on a special invitation from sultan Ali Adil Shah but, after the death of his royal patron, Akbar called him to Agra and offered him the exalted office of the chief *sadr*. By virtue of his office, Mir Fathullah also held charge of *karkhanas*, and ordnance factories. He had a number of mechanical inventions to his credit and one of his hobbies, apart from research and experimentation in rational sciences, was to deliver lectures on *maqulat* to the old and the young alike. Akbar used to discuss with him various problems regarding the production of heavy artillery, gun-powder and other weapons of war. Some of the mechanical inventions which effected improvement and economy in the state defences have been recorded by Abul Fazl in the *Ain i Akbari* (*Ains* 36-38). It was Mir Fathullah who directed the *daroghas* or superintendents of various state undertakings to provide vocational training to young boys in the various crafts and trades. His plan was to enrol a certain percentage of young recruits (*shagirds*) who were to receive stipends from government and be attached to the skilled workers and craftsmen for receiving training. Unfortunately, the medieval Indian scholars, skilled artists and mechanics did not have a truly scientific bent of mind and they failed to catch up with the ideas of Mir Fathullah, otherwise the seeds of modern science and technology might have been sown during the reign of Akbar the Great.

The age of Akbar has rightly been described as the period of renaissance in the fields of Persian and Hindi literature and the achievements of his reign in these fields have already been mentioned under his role as the national monarch of India. According to an observation, 'the brilliant development of original Hindi poetry in the time of Akbar may be ascribed partly to the undefinable influence exercised by a glorious and victorious reign, which necessarily produces a stimulating effect on all the activities of the human mind. Almost all Hindi poetry of merit is closely associated with the unrestricted practice of Hinduism which was absolutely assured by the government of Akbar.'[29] During his reign flourished *sant* Tulsi Dass, the celebrated author of *Ramcharit Manas* or the *Tulsi Ramayana*.[30] Tulsi Dass has been acknowledged as 'the greatest man of his age in India—greater even than Akbar himself, inasmuch as the conquest of the hearts and minds of millions of men and women effected by the poet was an achievement, infinitely more lasting and important than any or all the victories gained in war by the monarchs.[31] Tulsi Dass never visited the court of Akbar although some of his nobles, including Raja Man Singh and Mirza Abdur Rahim *khan i khana* were his disciples and admirers.

Jahangir and Shah Jahan, the worthy successors of Akbar, were equally great patrons of learning and literature. The liberal educational policy adopted by Akbar for the intellectual and cultural advancement of the Indians remained in full force till the end of Shah Jahan's reign. The literary movement born during Akbar's time gained momentum under Jahangir and continued with unabated zeal during the period of Shah Jahan's rule. The educational institutions established during the reign of Akbar flourished and their number increased manifold with the liberal financial aid from the government. Shah Jahan is credited to have founded a new college near the Jama Masjid at the township of Shahjahanabad in Delhi. The seventeenth century is particularly famous for the growth and development of Hindi language and literature. Shah Jahan and his eldest son Dara Shikoh loved to speak in Hindi; they composed verses in the spoken language of the people and were fond of listening to Hindi songs and music. Hindi language and literature acquired a place of respectability at the court and in the royal *harem* during the reign of Shah Jahan. A number of hindi scholars and poets, including Sunder Dass, Chintamani and Kavindracharya enjoyed the state patronage. Jagannath, the celebrated musician of Shah Jahan's reign, was also a born poet in hindi; he was honoured by the emperor with the title of *Maha Kavi Rai*. The disciplines of astronomy, mathematics, general sciences, historiography and the translation of Sanskrit works into Persian received impetus from the imperial court as ever before. Ibn Har Karan translated *Ramayana* and Munshi Banvali Dass *Prabodh Chandrodaya* into

Persian. Abdur Rashid rendered *bijganit* from Sanskrit into Persian. Abdul Hamid Lahori, Khafi Khan and a number of other historians, whose works have been referred to in this study, flourished during the reign of Shah Jahan. Mulla Farid, the greatest astrologer of the period, prepared the astral chart entitled *Zich i Shahjahani*, while Ataullah wrote a treatise on arithmetic, algebra and mensuration and dedicated it to Shah Jahan and Dara. Shah Jahan displayed religious intolerance in his dealings with the people at occasions *albeit* he was too shrewd and sagacious a statesman to allow religion to override the liberal and secular state policy as wisely laid by Akbar the Great.

4: Development of Art and Architecture

Mughal Architecture

The imperial mughals were great patrons of art and architecture. They took keen interest in the planning of forts, palaces mosques, tombs and even the new townships. They had their own ideas about the construction of buildings by the free amalgamation of the foreign and indigenous styles; it resulted in the evolution of what was called the mughal architecture which was, in fact, the national Indian architecture of that age.

Babar, who had left behind in central Asia 'magnificent architecture of Timurids' was not impressed by the urban life-style and buildings of the Indians. When he conquered the Punjab in 1526, he was 'depressed' to find Lahore deserted and in partial ruins; nor did he like Delhi, the erstwhile metropolis of the sultanate; he simply frowned at the turko-afghan monuments of Delhi. It is said that the only place which moved him 'to any degree of enthusiasm' was Gwalior where he was thrilled to see the magnificent fort, palaces and other public buildings constructed by its rajput rulers.[32] Babar records in his memoirs that he employed thousands of masons, stone-cutters and unskilled labourers at Delhi, Agra, Sikri, Biyana, Panipat, Dholpur, Gwalior and Koil for the construction of public buildings and mosques and the work on these buildings was in progress when he breathed his last after a short span of four years' rule. Of the buildings erected during his rule, only two mosques have survived the wear and tear of time; one at Panipat and the other at Sambhal. None of these possesses any outstanding architectural beauty. Babar intended to invite a pupil of the once renowned Albanian architect Sinan from Constantinople to take charge of the building activities of his newly founded kingdom but the plan did not materialise.

Humayun built a palace for himself in Delhi which was named *Din Panah*. It was razed to the ground by his political rival Sher Shah Sur probably to wipe out the symbols of the mughal

rule in India; some other buildings of Babar and Humayun might also have suffered the same fate during the Sur interlude. Two mosques of Humayun's period, one at Agra and the other at Fatehabad in Hissar, are also in partial ruins. The first two rulers of the mughal dynasty, 'on account of their taste and experience indirectly contributed to the establishment of a tradition favourable to the erection of buildings finer than those of the period of the sultanate of Delhi.'[33] Sher Shah Sur was a builder but in an entirely different sense; a man of the masses, he took keen interest in the truly nation-building activities. He ordered the construction of numerous *maktabs* and *madarssas*, civil hospitals, *serais*, bridges and roads throughout his empire. He built four national highways, including the old Grand Trunk Road (*Jarnaili Sarak*) from Sonargaon (Bengal) to Attock (northwest frontier) from Agra to Mandu from Agra to Jodhpur and Chittor, and from Lahore to Multan. He planted green trees and constructed no less than 1700 *serais* along these roads for the convenience of the travellers. The *serais* provided suitable accommodation, cooking facilities and drinking water for the travellers and their beasts of burden. Being situated on the main highways, they gradually developed into centres of trade and commerce. They also served the purpose of *dak chaukis* or resting places for the news-carriers of the postal department. At each *serai* were stationed two horsemen to carry the royal mail in the up as well as down direction. It is said that the postal arrangements of Sher Shah were so swift that the royal *firmans* could be delivered from one place to the other with great speed. A big fort, now known as *Purana Qila*, was built by Sher Shah on the ruins of Din Panah in Delhi; it served as the royal quarters. All of his buildings, except one small mosque, called Qila i Kohna Masjid, now lie in ruins. The mausoleum of Sher Shah, which was built by him at Sahsaram in Bihar, is the only extant building of his times which finds a respectable place in the historical monuments of medieval India. Constructed on a square platform with a plinth-level of 30 feet, in the centre of a water-tank, the central dome of the mausoleum is 71 feet in diameter. The monument has four longitudinal domes, one at each angle of the square enclosure and eight cupolas of the Persian style grouped round the central dome. Unique in its grandeur, solidity and masculine grace, the building contains, in the interior, all the delicacies of hindu decorative and structural designs.

The architectural activity started on a very grand scale during the age of Akbar the Great. He created an elaborate public works department for undertaking the construction of public buildings, gardens, roads, *serais*, bridges, wells and canals. Abul Fazl observes:

> "His Majesty plans splendid edifices and dresses the work of his mind and heart in the garment of stone and clay. Thus

mighty fortresses have been raised, which protect the timid, frighten the rebellious, and please the obedient. Delightful villas and imposing towers have also been built. They afford excellent protection against cold and rain, provide for the comforts of the princesses of the *harem*, and are conducive to that dignity which is so necessary for worldly power.

Everywhere also *serais* have been built, which are the comfort of travellers and the asylum of poor strangers. Many tanks and wells are being dug for the benefit of men and the improvement of the soil. Schools and places of worship are being founded, and the triumph arch of knowledege is newly adorned.

His Majesty has inquired into every detail connected with this department which is so difficult to be managed and requires such large sums. He has passed new regulations, kindled the lamp of honesty, and put a stock of practical knowledge into the hands of simple and inexperienced men."[34]

The peace and prosperity of the mughal reign encouraged migration of the people to the towns, and the rapid urbanisation of the habitats necessitated the introduction of town-planning rules and regulations by the state. Abul Fazl informs us that 'regulations for house-building are necessary; they are required for the comfort of the army, and are a source of splendour for the government. People that are attached to the world will collect in towns without which there would be no progress.'[35] Akbar founded the capital township of his dreams at Fatehpur Sikri which was two miles in length and one mile in breadth, and was enclosed on three sides by massive walls while the fourth side of it was protected by the construction of an artificial lake. The outer walls of the town had nine gates. Some of the magnificent buildings of Fatehpur Sikri, now lying in ruins, included the main buildings of the imperial secretariat, the treasury, *Diwan i Khas*, *Diwan i Aam*, *Panch Mahal*, the palaces of Mariam Makani, Turkish Sultana, Jodha Bai and Birbal, *Ibadat Khana*, the sleeping chambers and library of Akbar. Outside the enclosure was constructed the Jama Masjid with its lofty Buland Darwaza; the mosque contains, within its compound, the tomb of Sheikh Salim Chishti which is built with white marble. Akbar built three formidable forts, one each at Agra, Lahore and Allahabad, each one of which was studded with most impressive and expensive buildings for use by the imperial household and the nobility: some of these buildings are still extant and exhort the admiration of the visitors and the art critics. The foundation of the impregnable fort of Agra was laid by Akbar on the site where the brick fort of sultan Sikander

Lodhi was perviously situated. It was completed in the course of eight years (1564-72). Akbar is said to have raised as many as 500 building structures of various types within the fort to accommodate the imperial court, *harem* and the royal guards. The fort of Lahore which was built about the same time was still more gorgeous in plan and execution. The fort of Allahabad was built at a later stage. Akbar liked the extensive use of red sandstone with the intermingling of white marble in his building structures. The salient features of his buildings were an ideal synthesis of hindu and muslim art traditions so as to give them a perfectly homogeneous shape, construction of magnificent domes, arches, portals, imposing gateways and wholesale incorporation of the hindu decorative art designs.

Akbar was the builder of magnificent architectural complexes at almost all the important places of imperial residence in the country; it was his son and successor Jahangir who enjoyed the fruits of his labours and spent a happy and luxurious life therein. The construction of any more imperial buildings in continuation was not needed; it would have been simply wasteful expenditure. Therefore, Jahangir took up to painting as his hobby and extended liberal patronage to other fine arts, including music and dancing to enchant the royalty and *grandees* of the empire.

Shah Jahan's reign was, without any shadow of doubt, the Golden Age of medieval India from the point of view of the development of art and architecture. Shah Jahan was a builder *par excellence.* He had an inborn taste for it. It is said that even in his early youth he was very selective in the matter of his residential accommodation; he never felt contented until he had suitably altered and renovated the apartments assigned to him for his residence. On assuming the reins of government, he displayed his passion for architectural activity without restraint. B.P. Saksena explains that the two natural traits of Shah Jahan's character, viz; vanity and ambition, were primarily responsible for his devotional attachment to architectural activity; he writes:

> "Vanity always hankers after popular applause; and it may have struck him that he could secure this for all time by erecting magnificent buildings. Secondly, his ambition alway goaded him to achieve the unsurpassable. It was impossible to improve painting (which had reached its stage of perfection under the patronage of Jahangir) and so naturally he turned to architecture which provided an extensive field for improvement. And the buildings of his reign must have satisfied both his vanity and ambition."[36]

To the above may be added the immense wealth and unlimited resources at the command of Shah Jahan which enabled him to

engrave the 'sermons in stones' and preserve for posterity the glories of his reign in marble edifices. Shah Jahan erected all sorts of buildings and in all parts of his empire; every important town or place visited by him was gifted with some architectural monument or the other at the state expense. With a refined taste for architectural designs and passionate love for white marble and other specific type of building material, Shah Jahan did not like the massive buildings erected by Akbar in red sandstone at Agra, Lahore and elsewhere. He actually pulled down some of Akbar's buildings and erected in their place new ones of white marble which was available in abundance from the quarries of Makrana near Sambhar. Shah Jahan made a substantial contribution to the vast building complex of the fort by the construction of *Diwan i Aam*, *Diwan i Khas*, Musamman Burj, Moti Masjid, Shish Mahal, Khas Mahal, Machhi Mahal and other apartments for the royal ladies. The Musamman Burj is actually a beautiful building made of marble; it faces the river side of the fort and was originally decorated with precious stones. It was here that Shah Jahan spent the last days of his life in the captivity of his son and successor Aurangzeb. The Moti Masjid is by far the most beautiful of all the architectural monuments of the Agra fort. Made of white marble, it is situated on an elevated terrace in the courtyard to the north of the *Diwan i Aam* and measures 187 by 234 feet. It was built in seven years (1645-53) at a cost of three lakhs of rupees. It represents the mughal architectural style at its zenith.

Originally there was an open space in front of the Agra fort which was converted into a beautiful *chauk* with grassy lawns and flower-beds by Shah Jahan. His illustrious daughter Jahan Ara Begam constructed a magnificent mosque therein for public use; it was completed in five years (1643-48) at a cost of five lakhs of rupees.

Shah Jahan did not like Agra to be his imperial residence; he showed a preference for the historic town of Delhi and made up his mind to shift his court and the *harem* there. Being a lover of architectural beauty and style, Shah Jahan would not like to shift to the old buildings of his predecessors however useful and comfortable those might be. It necessitated the construction of an altogether new imperial township in Delhi. According to Inayat Khan, the emperor's desire was to select, on the banks of the Jumna, 'some pleasant site, distinguished by its genial climate, where he might found a splended fort and delightful edifices, agreeable to the promptings of his generous heart, through which streams of water should be made to flow, and the terraces of which should overlook the river.'[37] Shah Jahan visited Delhi and carried out an extensive survey of the landscape in its neighbourhood along the banks of the Jumna for a long time until a piece of ground, outside the city of Delhi, lying between the most distant

suburbs and Nurgarh, commonly called Salimgarh, was fixed upon for this purpose,'[38] with the approval of architects and astrologers. At an auspicious hour, 'the foundations of the township were marked out with the usual ceremonies, according to the plan devised in the august presence' on May 12, 1639. The township was named *Shahjahanabad*; it is now located by the famous Red Fort and the Jama Masjid, in the vicinity of Chandni Chauk. Again to quote Inayat Khan, 'throughout the imperial dominions wherever artificers could be found, whether plain stone-cutters, ornamental sculptors, masons, or carpenters, by the mandate worthy of implicit obedience, they were all collected together, and multitude of common labourers were employed in the work.' The palace-fort was completed and made fit for occupation after nine years and three months. Some of the buildings constructed therein were the *Diwan i Aam*, *Diwan i Khas*, Rang Mahal and Hira Mahal, everyone of which had its own ornamental garden with flower-beds, water-channels and fountains. Besides the imperial buildings, there were provided within the walls of the fort, spacious residential accommodation for the royal guards, store houses, recreation chambers, kitchens, and stables for horses and elephants. The *Diwan i Khas* of the Red Fort which adorned the *Takhat i Taus* –'The Peacock' Throne, was one of the most richly ornamented buildings of Shah Jahan which aimed at 'depicting his grandeur' at its height. The following couplet of Amir Khusrau, inscribed on one of its walls, pays a befitting tribute to the grand edifice:

Agar firdaus bar ru i zamin ast,
Hamin ast o hamin ast o hamin ast.

It means—'if there is a paradise on earth, it is this, it is this, none but this'. According to B.P. Saksena, the Red Fort of Delhi 'is one harmonious structure, built at one time and on one uniform plan. In beauty and magnificence, it is unique in the East, and perhaps unsurpassed in the world. It stands in marked contrast to Akbar's palace at Fatehpur Sikri. The one is the model of masculine vigour, the other of feminine over-elaboration; but both have charms of their own. The Dihli Palace (Red Fort) is the only one in India which enables us to understand what the arrangements of a complete palace were when deliberately undertaken, and carried out on the uniform plan.'[39] Shah Jahan provided the new township with a magnificent Jama i Masjid for public prayers in the vicinity of the Red Palace. Its foundation was laid in 1644 and it took about six years to complete at a cost of ten *lakhs* of rupees.

Among the miscellaneous but extant architectural monuments of Shah Jahan may be mentioned the mausoleum of Jahangir, which stands on the bank of the Ravi at Shahdra near Lahore,

and the pretty marble tomb of Nizamuddin Auliya in Delhi which casts a profound impact on the minds of the lovers of art, devotees and the tourists alike. Shah Jahan recast, in marble, the dome of the shrine of Sheikh Muinuddin Chishti at Ajmer, and constructed a Jama i Masjid near it. He laid out a huge but magnificent bathing *ghat*, 1240 feet in length, along the banks of the Anasagar Lake in Ajmer which contained five *baradaris*(twelve-doored mansions) of white marble for use by the royal ladies.

To crown them all, there is the Taj, the most celebrated of Shah Jahan's architectural monuments, said to be one of the 'seven wonders' of the world. A vision of Shah Jahan, embodied in milk-white marble, it constitutes one of the finest specimens of cultural heritage to mankind. It was built by him as a mausoleum of his beloved wife Arjmand Banu Begam, styled Mumtaz Mahal, who expired in 1631. The Myth that the Taj was planned or built under the guidance of an Italian or some other European architects, has long since been exploded by the art critics of international fame like Sir John Marshal, Percy Brown and E.B. Havell. It is now universally acknowledged that the Taj is a work purely of the Indian architects, artisans and craftsmen, and it represents the climax of Indian style, true to Asian traditions, and unaffected by European influence. Its chief designer was Ustad Ahmad Lahori who was honoured by the emperor with the lofty title of *Nadir ul Asar*.[40] The author of *Diwan i Afridi* makes mention of quite a few architects and craftsmen who were associated with the construction of the Taj Mahal; all of them were either Indians—hindus and muslim both or renowned experts from the muslim world. Besides others, there were Mukarramat Khan and Mir Abdul Karim—the architects, Imanat Khan Shirazi who engraved the Arabic inscriptions, Ismail Khan Rumi-the maker of the dome, ustad Isa Khan—mason of Agra, ustad Pira—carpenter of Delhi, Banuhar, Jhat Mal and Zorawar—thesculptors from Delhi, and Ram Mal Kashmiri—the horticulturist who laid out the garden of the Taj.[41] The structural work of the buildings was handled primarily by the muslims while the decoration was mainly the work of hindu craftsmen; the most difficult task of preparing the *pietra-dura* was entrusted to a group of hindu craftsmen from Kanauj [42] It is said that apart from the milk-white marble, about twenty varieties of precious stones were procured from various parts of India and elsewhere, including Ceylon, Kandahar, Yemen, Ghorbund and Persia for use in the construction of the Taj Mahal. It took twenty-two years to complete the whole structure at a cost of three crores of rupees; the principal marble dome alone took twelve years to finish.

The structure and architectural beauty of the Taj beggars description. The mausoleum of Mumtaz Mahal, with its allied garden and the building complex is in the form of a rectangle measuring 1900 by 1000 feet. It is enclosed by a high wall, surmounted by

four arcaded marble pavilions, one at each of its four corners. The mausoleum itself is situated on the short side of the rectangle along the southern bank of the Jumna, while the only ornamental entrance made of red sandstone, lies on its southern side. As we enter the courtyard, we are flanked by arched apartments and red sandstone building structure with arched verandahs for use by the guards, visitors or the shopkeepers, perhaps. The main gateway to the mausoleum, within the courtyard, is by itself a magnificent red sandstone structure of architectural value; its facade contains beautiful calligraphic inscription in Arabic. The vast space within the enclosure has been laid out into a beautiful garden with marble pathways, water courses, and the fountains. The principal structure of the mausoleum stands on a rectangular marble platform with twenty-two feet as its plinth level. It is adorned with a cupola at each corner, while the main dome of pearlwhite marble, in the centre, is supported on a tall marble drum and rises to a height of 187 feet. The dome is spherical in shape and rests on the drum like a ball on the top of a cup, *albeit* its 'upper curve gradually tapers off into a foliated crest.'[43] On each of the four corners of the platform, there is a minaret, crowned by a *kiosk*; of course, the central dome towers above all the surrounding cupolas and the minarets. No wonder, the glories of Shah Jahan's reign are vividly depicted in the architectural monuments of his reign. According to an observation, 'the buildings constructed in Shah Jahan's reign stand as a living monument of unsurpassed engineering skill. They have maintained their charm and freshness in the full vigour, and they sumptuously feast the eyes of visitors from all corners of the world. They breathe sublimity, peace, elegance, and though over-elaboration in some of them appears a little grotesque to an expert, yet the untrained eye is simply enchanted by their all round beauty. Even if the entire mass of historical literature had perished, and only these buildings had remained to tell the story of Shah Jahan's reign, there is little doubt that it would have still been pronounced the most magnificent in history.'[44]

The story of Shah Jahan's achievements in the domain of art and architecture would remain incomplete if we do not make mention of a unique specimen of art—the *Takhat i Taus* or 'the peacock throne' on which the emperor seated himself in the newly constructed *Diwan i Khas* of the Red Fort of Delhi. This throne was made of 'one *lakh tolas* of pure gold' and studded with rubies, garnets, diamonds, rich pearls and emeralds exceeding 50,000 *miskals* in weight. The throne was nine feet in length, 7.5 feet in breadth and fifteen feet in height. Its canopy, again made of solid gold, stood on twelve emerald columns. The outside of the canopy was of enamel work with occasional gems while the inside was thickly set with rubies, garnets and other jewels. On the top of each column of the canopy, there were two peacocks of gold, thickest with gems, and between each of the pair of peacocks there was a tree, set with rubies and diamonds. emeralds and pearls. The throne stood on

four legs of solid gold and its ascent consisted of three steps, set with jewels of the rarest quality. The throne was completed in the course of seven years under the care of Bebadal Khan, the superintendent of the royal goldsmithy.[45] A conservative estimate of the cost of its construction, as given by Abdul Hamid, to be a crore of rupees, according to the metallic value of gold in those days, was yet a gross underestimate of the true value of the priceless jewellery which was utilised in the preparation of the throne. The Peacock Throne fell into the hands of Nadir Shah in 1739 who took it away to Persia.

Development of Fine Arts

The term art includes architecture as well *albeit* the latter being massive and bulky constitutes the most dominant of all other arts which, for the sake of distinction, are usually styled as the fine arts. Incidentally, architecture which deals with the construction of building, cannot make progress in isolation; most of the other arts such as painting, engraving, sculpture and metallurgy, etc; are equally involved in the construction and beautification of the architectural monuments while numerous other fine arts help provide refined goods and aesthetic environment for the pleasure and entertainment of the men of culture and wealth who adorn those magnificent buildings. Therefore, from the point of view of development. most of the fine arts and architecture usually occupy the same level; they compliment one another. Ancient Indian culture had the noblest and most highly advanced traditions in numerous forms of fine arts. The Indians were past masters in the fine arts of painting, music, dancing, and sculpture besides engraving, calligraphy, jewellery and a host of industrial arts such as metallurgy, pottery, textiles, embroidery, ivory works, carpentry, wood-carving and what not ? The sultans of Delhi paid attention towards the construction of new buildings *albeit* they did practically nothing to promote the fine arts. Most of them had no refined tastes or aesthetic sense to appreciate the value of fine arts: of all the rulers of India, they were, perhaps, the least artistic in their outlook. The arts of sculpture, painting, engraving, calligraphy in Sanskrit and other Indian languages, and dancing were straightaway dubbed as anti-Islamic, the very existence of which was abhorrent to the orthodox *sunnis*. Therefore, the credit for their survival during the age of the sultans goes exclusivlev to the hindu rulers and incessant zeal of the hindu artists and men of culture to preserve their ancient cultural heritage without any hope for appreciation or reward from 'the Islamic state'. The industrial arts had, however, their inherent capacity to survive because of their material return to those who plied them. The religious prejudices of the muslim rulers against music, dancing, painting and other such fine arts broke down but gradually. It was left to the imperial mughals to bring about a radical change in the attitude of the muslim theologians

towards these fine arts, and it were they who provided an atmosphere of socio-cultural freedom in the country and gave recognition and incentives at the court for the cultivation of these arts.

Akbar was a great lover of fine arts, including calligraphy, painting, music, dancing and the like; he nationalised all these arts by extending liberal patronage to the artists of all communities and races, and by encouraging them to evolve out new forms by complete synthesis of foreign and indigenous traits. The medieval Indian scholars, whether of Persian and Arabic or Sanskrit and Hindi, were perforce good calligraphists. The mughal emperors employed numerous professional calligraphists to give a helping hand to the royal historiographers and chroniclers in preparing the copies of their manuscripts particularly. Calligraphy or beautiful handwriting was treated as a fine art and a professional skill, the possession of which was deemed one of the essential attributes of scholarship in those days, and the professional calligraphists received recognition as 'artists at last as highly as the draftsmen and painters who enriched the manuscripts with delicately executed illustrations.' The patrons of learning were attracted by the penmanship of a manuscript and its illustrations, and 'the specimens of the handiwork of the more celebrated artists in writing were carefully collected and preserved with reverence in albums'[46] by the mughal emperors and the aristocracy.

The art of painting was thought to be un-Islamic; it was Akbar who put it 'on a safe and strong footing by removing the stigma of sacrilege attached to it.'[47] He gave 'the first definite impulse' to what afterwards came to be known as the Mughal School of Painting. About the development of this art under him, Abul Fazl writes:

> "Drawing the likeness of anything is called *taswir*. His Majesty, from his earliest youth, has shown a great predilection for this art, and gives it every encouragement as he looks upon it as a means, both of study and amusement. Hence the art flourishes, and many painters have obtained great reputation. The works of all painters are weekly laid before His Majesty by the *daroghas* and the clerks; he then confers rewards according to excellence of workmanship, or increases the monthly salaries."[48]

Abul Fazl mentions 'among the forerunners on the high road of art, the names of Mir Sayyad Ali of Tabriz, Khwaja Abdus Samad, styled the *Shirinqalam*— 'sweet pen', Daswanth and Basawan. Apart from producing the masterpieces of paintings, the court-painters were asked to ornament the standard Persian works, both prose and poetry, with pictures and illustrations. We have it on the testimony of Abul Fazl that the *Dastan i Amir*

Hamza was represented in twelye volumes, and 'clever painters made the most astonishing illustrations for no less than one thousand and four hundred passages of the story.' Similarly, the *Ain i Akbari*, the *Razmnama*, the *Ramayana*, and the narratives of *Nal Damayanti*, *Kalia Damnah* and *Aiyar Danish* were all illustrated. Abul Fazl writes that the emperor 'himself sat for his likeness, and also ordered to have the likeness taken of all the grandees of the realm. An immense album was thus formed; those that have passed away have received a new life, and those who are still alive have immortality promised them'.[49] The masters of other fine arts such as the ornamental artists, gilders and line-drawers were also given employment and encouraged to pursue their arts with devotion.

Likewise, Akbar was very fond of music, instrumental as well as vocal. Abul Fazl states that

> "His Majesty pays much attention to music, and is the patron of all who practise this enchanting art. There are numerous musicians at the court, Hindus, Iranis, Turanis, Kashmiris, both men and women. The court musicians are arranged in seven divisions, one for each day in the week. When His Majesty gives the order they let the wind of harmony flow, and thus increase intoxication in some and sobriety in others.[50]

Abul Fazl gives a list of thirty-six principal musicians of the imperial court, headed by Tansen of Gwalior, a reference to which has already been made in this study under the role of Akbar as the national monarch of India.

The art of painting reached the zenith of its excellence during the reign of Jahangir (1605-27). He had received lessons in painting from the master artists of Akbar's reign during his days of childhood. Collection of antiquities, particularly, paintings, became one of his hobbies and he grew up to be a fine painter, art critic and connoisseur. Jahangir probably does not over-estimate his artistic skill in painting when he resorts to self-praise in his memoirs in the words that follow:

> "As regards myself, my liking for painting and my practice in judging it have arrived at such a point that when any work is brought to me, either of the deceased artists, or those of the present day, without the names being told me, I say on the spur of the moment that it is the work of such and such man. And if there be a picture containing many portraits, and each face by the work of a different master, I can discover which face is the work of each of them. If any other person has put in the eye-brows of a face, I can perceive whose work the original face is and who has painted the eyes and eye-brows."[51]

Sir Thomas Roe, who visited the court of Jahangir in 1615 as a royal emissary from England, had a marvellous experience regarding the mughal emperor's unbounded love for painting and the skill of the master painters of India. He narrates that, among other gifts he had brought with him, there was a beautiful painting which Jahangir had specially ordered from London. It was presented by Thomas Roe to the emperor, to the great delight of the latter. After a couple of days, Thomas Roe was summoned by Jahangir in his private apartments at night. There he was confronted with six identical paintings displayed on a table in the dim light of a candle and asked to pick out the original one which he had brought from England. Thomas Roe was simply amazed and could not, all at once, distinguish the original from its imitation copies, which had been prepared by the master artists of Jahangir's court. Needless to say, the art of painting reached its perfection under the royal patronage of Jahangir; it became absolutely Indian in character and was unsurpassed in the annals of its history throughout the world. Let the readers know something about the master artists of Jahangir's court in his own words:

> "This day Abul Hasan, painter, who bore the title of *Nadir uz Zaman*, drew a picture of my court, and presented it to me. He attached it as a frontispiece to the *Jahangirnama* (the emperor's autobiography). As it was well worthy of praise, I loaded him with great favours. He was an elegant painter, and had no match in his time. If the celebrated artists, Abul Hai and *Bihzad* were now alive, they would do him full justice for his exquisite taste in painting. His father Aka Khan, was always with me while I was a prince, and his son was born in my household. However, the son is far superior to the father. I gave him a good education, and took care to cultivate his mind from his youth till he became one of the most distinguished men of his age. The portraits furnished by him were beautiful. Mansur is also a master of the art of drawing, and he has the title of Nadirul Asli. In the time of my father and my own, there have been none to compare with these two artists."[52]

The other great painters of Jahangir's time were Farruk Beg, Nadir, Murad, Bishan Dass, Madhava, Manohar, Tulsi and the Keshava brothers. Bishan Dass specialised in taking likenesses and drawing the natural objects; Jahangir was a great lover of nature and he highly prized the pictures depicting the natural scenery. Miniature painting was an off-shoot of the art, the insight into which had been obtained by Jahangir from his rajput mother.

Architecture was the primary interest of Shah Jahan *albeit* the fine arts, including painting, music and dance were patronised by him with equal zeal. Shah Jahan inherited his taste for painting from his father, and he himself was a good painter. The reputed

painters of his day like Muhammad Qadir, Mir Hasan, Anup Chitra and Chintamani adorned the imperial court and enriched the art galleries of the empire with their valuable contributions, *albeit* the fact remains that the art of Indian painting had reached perfection during the reign of Jahangir, and, in spite of their best efforts, Shah Jahan's skilled painters could not improve upon the works of their predecessors. Shah Jahan was fond of vocal as well as instrumental music, and he extended liberal patronage to the master artists. Dance and music constituted the most colourful part of the mughal culture. The imperial court was a source of inspiration to the lovers of fine arts, and it provided avenues for development and display to the poets, singers, musicians and dancers without discrimination of creed or sex. Shah Jahan's court set the standards in organising music and dance meets (*mahafils*) for the mughal nobility and aristocracy of the times. The renowned musicians of the day, Jagan Nath and Janardhan Bhatt adorned the court of Shah Jahan. It is said that Shah Jahan was once so much overwhelmed (fell under *wajad*) by the musical performance of Jagan Nath that he ordered him to be weighed against gold, silver, diamonds and other precious stones, all of which were bestowed by the emperor upon the master artist as a reward. One of Shah Jahan's favourite Hindi tunes was the *dhrupad rag*, played by Tan Sen's son-in-law Lal Khan to the great delight of the emperor; Lal Khan was honoured with the title of *Guna Samundra*. Sur Sen was a master-player on the *veena* while Sukh Sen enchanted the courtiers with the masterly handling of the *rubab*.

Mughal Gardens

The imperial mughals were great lovers of nature; they took delight in spending their spare time in the lap of natural environment. When free from their military exploits and governmental engagements, they went out for horse-riding and hunting in the wilds or took up to gardening as a hobby. They laid out magnificent gardens, fruit orchards and green parks round about their palaces, central and provincial headquarters, public places, on the banks of the rivers and in the valleys and dales which they used as holiday resorts or places of retreat and temporary headquarters during the summer season. The famous Mughal Gardens which dot every nook and corner of the country even today are thus a pleasant cultural heritage of the imperial mughals to the posterity. Babar laid out the first 'mughal garden' at Agra; named as *Hasht Bihisht* or *Nur i Afshan*; it was spread along the eastern bank of the river Yamuna at the site now located by Ram Bagh. Akbar founded gardens at Agra fort, Fatehpur Sikri, Sikandra and Srinagar (*Nasim Bagh*). Jahangir had a great fascination for the gardens; he laid out the maximum number of these throughout his empire, which included the Shalimar garden at Srinagar and the Mughal Garden at Shahdra (Lahore). The fort of Lahore and the Taj Mahal were adorned with beautiful gardens by Shah Jahan.

The mughal nobility, in imitation of their royal patrons, also spent lavishly on the construction and maintenance of gardens. Nishat Bagh of Srinagar was laid out by Asaf Khan, the brother of Nur Jahan and prime minister of Jahangir during the concluding years of his reign. The mughal gardens were geometrical in design and lay-out. They were put under the charge of experienced horticulturists; the latter made the most scientific selection of the fruit trees, flowering plants foliage, and grasses to suit the climatic conditions and environment. The gardens were mostly square or rectangular in shape; the whole space was further split up into symmetrical parks by 'an intricate lace-work of waterways and fountains' or long rows of ever-green trees and flowering plants. The various parks were covered with thick carpet of velvet-like high quality grasses, symmetrically laid-out flower-beds and clusters of elegant trees. The water-channels, usually falling in artificial water-falls, passed through *baradaries* or pavilions which were used as resting places or for get-togethers, recreation and informal audiences. Truly speaking, the mughal gardens presented the picture of a fairyland or heaven on earth for the holiday-makers.

5. Mutual Impact of Hinduism and Islam

The medieval Indian society as it stood in the beginning of the eighteenth century on the eve of the establishment of the British rule had come into existence as a result of five hundred years of continuous interaction and synthesis between Hinduism and Islam, or the two socio-cultural streams, one indigenous and the other exotic. What precise role was played by Islam in moulding the composition and character of the Indian society is a matter of conjecture; one thing is however certain that the sum-total of Islamic contribution to the medieval Indian society was but a fraction of the whole. India, the land of teeming millions, with one of the richest and the most conservative cultural treasure troves of the world, was like a mighty ocean into which the Islamic stream of refreshing and invigorating waters mingled up and became a part and parcel of the whole. The descendants of the once foreign muslim conquerors were thoroughly Indianised by the end of the seventeenth century; India became their homeland or *watan* as much as that of the hindus, and from the socio-cultural points of view they became indistinguishable from the rest of the Indian masses but for their 'sentimental leanings' towards Mecca and Medina which were the places of pilgrimage for them as Kapilvastu, Bodhgaya and Nalanda had once been for the Buddhists of south Asia and China. Otherwise the muslim countries of Arabia, Iran and Turkistan were as much foreign to them as they were to the hindus of India. The thesis of Mohammad Yasin is correct that 'the muslims of Hindustan were different from their co-religionists in the other parts of the world'.[53] Islam was no doubt a connecting link between the muslims of India and those of other countries

just as christianity was the common religious bond between the inhabitants of England, France and Germany. 'The muslim world'—the oft-repeated slogan of some religious fanatics, was neither a political nor a cultural unit; it was a myth in medieval India and is a political stunt today.

Islam did not impress the bulk of the Indian population as a superior religious or cultural force nor did it produce 'a revolutionary' effect on hindu religious thought and practices. The contention of some that the *bhakti* movement was an outcome of direct contact between Hinduism and Islam has been refuted in the main text of this study; our findings are that the *bhakti* movement was not influenced in its basic concepts by *sufism* although the two movements gave impetus to each other on the common issues of 'universal brotherhood' and 'hindu-muslim unity'. The *bhakti* movement increased the confidence of the hindu masses in their own faith and stopped large-scale conversions to Islam. The presence of Islam made the hindus more orthodox and conservative in their religious outlook and social customs. Caste system became still more rigid and the evils of child marriage and infanticide found their way into the hindu society as a negative impact of the aggressiveness of the muslim conquerors. *Purdah* system of the muslims was adopted by the ladies of upper strata of the hindus.

Whereas Urdu was the offspring of Hinduism and Islam, Persian, which was forced upon the country by muslim rulers as the state language, was, in the long run, accepted by the hindus as the language of opportunity and synthetic culture of the age. The hindu scholars, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, vied with their muslim fellow-brethren in enriching the Persian literature and thought in prose as well as poetry. The entire range of muslim dress, social customs and food habits, indoor and out-door games, manners and social behaviour, superstitions and taboos were absorbed by the multitude of the hindus without demur except that they would not touch beef nor eat in the common utensils or kitchens with the muslims. Ancient hindu architecture was changed beyond all recognition by the impact of Islam; so much so that even the hindu temples 'could not remain immune from the influence of the mughal architectural forms.' The rajput chieftains freely patronised mughal art and architecture and transmitted the cultural trends of the imperial court, in the cultivation of which they themselves had played a significant role, to their states and its aristocracy. Hindus were not unfamiliar with gardens in the past *albeit* the mughal gardens as referred to above, constituted a rich cultural heritage to the whole of India.

As regards the muslims of medieval India, they were what the indigenous culture had made of them in the course of five hundred years. They had become Indians in thought, speech and action; none of them could claim with certainty what percentage of the

foreign blood did he carry in his veins. Religion is a part of culture but not the whole of it. It is our contention that the two religions—Hinduism and Islam, imparted religiosity as a common cultural trait in its manifold forms to their protagonists which nourished the medieval Indian culture as a whole. Religion by itself could not act as a dividing factor in the Indian society unless it was exploited by a foolhardy ruler,[54] devoid of national consciousness and obsessed with religious fanaticism or sectarian outlook.[55] In our opinion, it looks rather old to ask the question how far Indian muslims were influenced by Hinduism or the indigenous culture. It may, on the other hand, be more relevant to prove the extent to which they had retained the foreign cultural traits apart from their religion and the holy scriptures. Numerous examples of the Indian customs and manners, superstitions and other practices adopted by the muslims from the hindus, as given by Mohammad Yasin in his book—*A Social and Cultural History of Islamic India (1605-1748)*, can be multiplied. We agree with the conclusions drawn by him about the impact of Hinduism and the indigenous culture on the Indian muslims; he writes:

> "During the period under review (viz; from 1605 to 1748 A.D.), we hardly come across any facts to justify the view that the muslims constituted a distinct *nation* by themselves . . . The muslim community of India was essentially an integral part of the Indian people having much more in common with other people of India than with those outside India . . . The great redeeming feature of the life of the muslim community of Hindustan . . . was that they had much fewer points of quarrel with other communities than those of later times. Beneath the turmoil of political confusion (as a result of the reactionary policy adopted by Aurangzeb) the even tenor of the Indianisation of the muslim community continued uninterrupted . . . on the whole, the wholesome principle of 'give and take' in the cultural life of India continued undisturbed, and muslims had less prejudice to import silently colourful hindu customs in birth, and to partake of the mirth and joy of gay Holi and Hindola (swinging in the rainy season).[56]

6: The Anti-Climax

To the great misfortune of the Indians, Aurangzeb, who ascended the throne of Delhi on July 21, 1658, after putting his father and the reigning monarch Shah Jahan into confinement, proved a misfit in the newly emerging framework of a secular nation state. He recklessly reversed the wheel of national progress and thereby brought about the fall of the mughal empire. As a result of his reactionary state policies, the socio-cultural progress of the country came to a standstill. Aurangzeb was an orthodox *sunni mussalman* who wanted to convert the *dar ul harab* of India into *dar ul Islam* by

utilising the resources of the state. He looked upon the non-muslims as *kafirs* or 'infidels', and had no soft corner for the *shias* and *sufis*, who, according to him, were not true *mussalmans*. He was, in fact, an anti-thesis of Akbar in thought, word and deed. Aurangzeb's accession, writes Adolf Waley, 'brought about a great change, for to his puritanical mind, painting savoured of the idolatory forbidden by the Prophet; poetry served no useful purpose; and music was an object of detestation as he looked upon it in the light of an immoral gratification of the senses.[57] As a 'defender of the faith', he took upon himself the duty to enforce the Islamic law in statecraft in measured paces, and make the muslims conform to the orthodox *sunni* standards. As a result, Islam's premier position as the state religion was re-affirmed and the muslims began to be treated as the favourite children of the state. The orthodox *mullas* acquired a position of dignity and influence at the imperial court. The old religious powers and functions of the chief *sadr* and his establishment at the central as well as provincial levels were restored. All the *masjids* and religious institutions of the muslims received state protection and patronage on preferential basis. The salaries and allowances of the *imams* and *mullas* were fixed and they once again acquired their respectable status as government officers. The old mosques received a face-lift and many new mosques were ordered to be built at state expense. The government took over the propagation of the faith as its primary duty. Ordinances were issued to make the muslims conform to the orthodox rules of conduct. The office of the *muhtasib*, as censor of public morals, regained its importance with its traditional religious powers and functions. The *muhtasibs* were authorised to punish those who contravened the Islamic principles. The *shias* and *sufis* were persecuted. Sheikh Sarmad, one of the prominent *sufi* saints, with a large following, was put to death on a charge of heresy. Many converts to Islam who were suspected of having reverted to the old faith were punished. The worst sufferers among the muslims were, however, the members of Ismailia or Bohra community of Gujarat.

The second phase of Aurangzeb's religious policy unfolded itself when he made deliberate efforts to undermine the influence of the liberal-minded muslim officers and the rajput chieftains at the imperial court. Most of the powerful rajput nobles and broad-minded muslim officers and courtiers were gradually dispersed to various parts of the empire on far-flung or hazardous official assignments, and replaced by the orthodox *mullas* at the imperial court. Under the influence of the religious bigots, he made up his mind to give an Islamic touch to the court in its organisation and working. He was dead against what he described as 'the infidel atmosphere' at the court. Aurangzeb found fault with the decorative and architectural designs of the *darbar* and public buildings, the court etiquette, dress and liveries of the courtiers and nobility, and so on and so forth. In the process of hair-splitting of the things Islamic and un-Islamic, the narrow-minded and bigoted and *mullas* found that many a socio-cultural aspect of the court,

which had been acquired wholesale or was an adaptation of the hindu culture, or which could be traced back to the indigenous culture of the land, was un-Islamic and, therefore, ought to be discarded by the muslims. In other words, the fruits of centuries of the socio-cultural developments on the Indian soil, by the Indo-Muslims, must be given up. The Islamic touch of Aurangzeb, therefore, boiled down to an anti-hindu or rather anti-Indian stance which aimed at establishing the superiority and dominance of the foreign traits of the Indo-Muslim culture. April 2, 1679 was a black day in the history of mughal rule in India when Aurangzeb made a public proclamation of *jehad* or 'holy war' against all the hindus of India with the object of converting the 'land of the infidels' into *dar ul Islam*. It was signalled by the re-imposition of *jaziya* on them which had earlier been abolished by Akbar in 1564. Thereby, the hindus were reduced to the position of *zimmis* whose status is defined by Jadu Nath Sarkar as a 'modified form of slavery'.[58] It brings us to the third phase of Aurangzeb's religious policy which aimed at deliberate and perpetual persecution of hindus at state level with a view to the extirpation of Hinduism from the land by hook or by crook. After April 1679 Aurangzeb exploited all the resources of the state, including money, administrative machinery and the armed forces for the fulfilment of his religious undertaking as head of 'an Islamic state'. Under his personal directive and inspiration 'every device short of general massacre in cold blood was resorted to in order to convert heathen subjects.'[59] The last twenty-eight years of Aurangzeb's reign constitute a dark chapter in the annals of mughal period when the persecution of hindus was carried out on an unprecedented scale. As a reaction, the initial non-violent protest of the hindus against religious tyranny gradually assumed the form of organised opposition, leading ultimately to open defiance of authority and revolts. It led to disintegration and downfall of the mughal empire. Aurangzeb's reign thus marks an anti-climax in the otherwise glorious era of medieval Indian history and culture. The virus of religious communalism which subsequently infested the body of India, leading to the Partition of the country in 1947, had sprouted in the diseased brain of Aurangzeb, the perverted genius of his age. The evil of religious communalism was an Indian product which had nothing to do with the turko-afghan invaders and their exotic culture of the remote past. At a later stage, the British, in the pursuit of their imperial policy of 'divide and rule', made an effective use of this Indian cultural heritage.

Notes:

1. Pierre L. van den Berghe, *Man in Society—A Biosocial View*; Elsevier, New York/Oxford/Amsterdam, 1975, p. 25.
2. For details refer to, Pitirim Sorokin, *Social and Cultural Dynamics*; London, 1957; Herbert Spencer, *The Evolution of Society*; edited by Robert L. Carneiro, under the serial publications, entitled, "Classics in Anthropology", Chicago & London, 1967;

C.B. Mamoria, *Social Problems and Social Disorganisation in India*; Allahabad, 1960; D.P. Mukerji, *Sociology of Indian Culture*; Jaipur, sec. rev. ed; 1979 reprint.,
and T.K.N. Unnithan & others (ed.), *Towards a Sociology of Culture in India*; New Delhi, 1965.

3. Berghe, Man in Socity, *op. cit.*, p. 208.
4. *ibid.*, p. 209.
5. *ibid.*
6. *ibid.*
7. The author corroborates the thesis of Balraj Madhok that Indianisation, viz; the Indian way of life 'is a positive concept' and that 'there is nothing narrow, sectarian or iconoclastic about it'. Of course, it 'does not require of any one to give up his attachment to social, religious or other groups to which he may belong. It only aims at moving the nation group higher than any other group in the order of one's priorities and loyalties. Indianisation does not mean that a muslim should cease to be a muslim or a bengali should cease to be a bengali. It only means that if there is a clash between the interests of a state or province and India as a whole or between interests of a religious community and the country as a whole, one should be prepared to sacrifice the interests of his community or province for the sake of national interests. As such Indianisation is another name for creating a strong sense of nationalism which is the total of cohesive forces in any country, in the Indian people."—*Indianisation*; Hind Pocket Books, Delhi, n.d., pp. 30-31.
8. J.A. Dubois quoted in V.P.S. Raghuvanshi, *Indian Society in the Eighteenth Century*; New Delhi, 1969, p. 30.
9. Ishwari Prasad, A Short History of Muslim Rule in India; *op. cit.*, p. 517.
10. Abul Fazl, *Ain i Akbari* (Blochmann Phillott), 1, *Ain* 22.
11. *ibid, Ain* 15.
12. Satish Chandra, *Parties and Politics at the Mughal Court, 1707-40*; pp. xxxii-xxxiv.
13. Raghuvanshi, Indian Society, *op. cit.*, p. 85.
14. Mohammad Yasin, *A Social History of Islamic India (1605-1748)*, Munshiram (1958), sec. rev. ed; 1974, pp. 107-8.
15. *ibid.*, p. 112
16. Foster William, *Early Travels in India*; Oxford, 1921, p. 308.
17. De Laet, *Empire of a Great Mogul*; Eng. trs. by J.S. Hoyland and annotation by S.N. Banerjee, Bombay, p. 91.
18. J.A. Malcolm, *Memoirs of Central India*; 2 vols; London, 1832, II, pp. 439-40.
19. W.H. Moreland, *Agrarian System of Moslem India*; Allahabad, 1929, p. 131.
20. Elphinstone, History of India, *op. cit.*, pp. 602-3.
21. Abul Fazl, *Aini Akbari*, I, pp. 288-89.
22. *ibid.*, p. 289.
23. Medieval Indian Culture, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-6.
24. The scholars used to read out the books to Akbar in his hours of leisure in his harem, particularly, before going to sleep.
25. *Ain i Akbari*; I, pp. 109-10.
26. Then valued at Rs. 64, 63, 731; the figures of the inventory were taken from official registers, copied independently by two European writers—Monrique and De Laet.—V.A. Smith, *Akbar the Great Mogul*; Oxford, 1919, p. 424.
27. *Ain i Akbari*; I, p. 550.

28. S.A. Nadvi, quoted in K.P. Sahu, *Some Aspects of North Indian Social Life*: *1000-1526*; Calcutta, 1973, p. 153.
29. V.A. Smith, Akbar, *op. cit.*, p. 421.
30. An epic poem of universal appeal, written in seven books in archaic Hindi, the vernacular of Ayodhya and the surrounding region, in the sixteenth century.
31. V.A. Smith, *Akbar*, p. 417.
32. Wolsely Haig (ed.), *Cambridge History of India*; OUP, Vol. IV, Indian reprint by S. Chand, 1971, p. 523.
33. A.L. Srivastava, *Medieval Indian Culture*, p. 170.
34. *Ain i Akbari*; I, p. 232.
35. *ibid.*
36. B.P. Saksena, *History of Shahjahan of Delhi:* Allahabad, 1958, p. 263.
37. Inayat Khan, *Shahjahannama E & D* VII, pp. 85-86.
38. *ibid.*, p. 86.
39. *Shahjahan*; pp. 263-64.
40. M. Yasin Siddiqi quoted in A.L. Srivastava, *Medievaal Indian Culture*; pp. 223-24.
41. J.N. Sarkar, Studies in Mughal India; *op. cit.*, pp. 31-32.
42. *CHI*, IV p. 564.
43. For details refer to E.B. Havell, *Indian Architecture*; *Its Psychology, Structure and History from the Muhammedan Invasion to the Present Day*; London, 1913, pp. 17-40.
44. B.P. Saksena, *Shahjahan*, pp. 261-62.
45. Abdul Hamid Lahori, *Badshahnama*; *E & D* VII, pp. 45-46.
46. Abul Fazl, *Ain i Akbari*; I, p. 109.
47. S.M. Jaffar, *Some Cultural Aspects of Muslim Rule in India*; Peshawar, 1939, pp. 130-31.
    According to Jaffar, 'it was largely during Akbar's reign that muslim conception of painting underwent such a radical change that the art, hitherto held in derision as being an aid to idolatory, began to receive active attention and encouragement on the ground, that it taught the existence of God and strengthened belief in Him'.—*ibid.*
48. *Ain i Akbari*, I, p. 113.
49. *ibid.*, p. 115.
50. *ibid.*
51. *Tuzuk i Jahangiri*; Eng trs. by Rodgers & Henry Beveridge, 2 vols, Royal Asiatic Society, London, 1909-14, II, p. 20.
52. *ibid.*
53. Social History of Islamic India, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-78.
54. A medieval counterpart of the modern self-seeking politicians.
55. During his sojourn to England and other European countries, the author of the present study found that the Europeans, even some scholars of Indian History (viz; that of undivided India) or those who claimed to have visited India or Pakistan after the Partition in 1947, could not distinguish between an Indian and a Pakistani until they were apprised of it. A Graduate from Jullundur, then working as a factory hand in Birmingham, told the author that 'these bloody Indians', a popular epithet was hurled by the white labour, partly in fun and partly out of jealousy, on the Indian and Pakistani workers alike, reminding thereby that the Pakistanis were a part and parcel of the Indian community or cultural group. No political stunts or slogan-mongering have been able to divest the inhabitants of Pakistan of their Indian cultural heritage.
56. Yasin, *Social History of Islamic India*, pp. 156-58.
57. Adolf Waley, A Pageant of India (1926), Indian reprint, Delhi, 1975, p. 464.
58. J.N. Sarkar, Aurangzeb, *op. cit.*, III, pp. 250-51.
59. *ibid.*, p. 254.

Conclusion

The study of the foregoing pages of this volume brings to light four distinct phases in the history of medieval Indian society and culture. The opening scene lands us into the so-called *rajput period* of ancient Indian civilisation. It presents the picture of a regulatory hindu society whose socio-cultural advancement had been halted by its defective social stratification, exploitative and selfish character of its priestly class, and uncreativeness of its socio-political leadership. The manifold virtues of the rajput culture were not universal; these were confined mostly to the ruling elite and upper strata of the otherwise caste-ridden and self-stultified society, suffering from the chronic diseases of untouchability, orthodoxy, superstitions and the lack of national unity. Thus the multitudes of the hindus did not add to their social strength because they stood like a house divided against itself. That is why the bulk of hindu populace stood forth as mere spectators when the rajput rulers had to fight a life and death struggle against the turkish invaders; their social vision had become so narrow that they did not consider themselves responsible for the defence of their own hearths and homes. As a result, the Indians lost their national independence and religious freedom at the hands of the turko-afghan conquerors who gradually overran the whole of India in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The original inhabitants of the country, having been deprived of their rights of citizenship by being dubbed as *zimmis* were treated as a burden on the land while still in occupation of their ancestral hearths and homes. This period which represents the second phase in the history of medieval Indian society, was marked by tension and serious conflict between the foreign muslim settlers and hindus. The early muslim conquerors were city dwellers *albeit* the *iqta* system introduced by the sultans of Delhi led to the spread of muslim influence and population in the countryside. The thirteenth century witnessed a head-on collision between two social systems, Hinduism and Islam—the one indigenous and the other foreign, as a consequence of which Islam was firmly rooted in the Indian soil as a powerful social force by the beginning of the fourteenth century.

The third phase in the history of medieval Indian society and culture begins with the Khalji revolution of 1290 which put an end to the political and social dominance of the foreign and privileged turkish nobility in northern India. The Khaljis, though turks by race, belonged to the muslim commoners who were fairly Indianised. Alauddin Khalji (1296-1316) established Islam as a political force in the south which assumed the form of religious and cultural

force as well during the reign of Muhammad bin Tughluq (1325-51). These two great sultans exercised a profound influence, through their liberal state policies, on the political, socio-economic and cultural life of the Indians. The fourteenth century, which covers the period of rule of the Khalji and Tughluq dynasties, thus forms a turning point in the history of socio-cultural development of India; during this period, conflict between the two cultural forces was replaced first by stalemate and then mutual toleration. It gradually set the stage for interaction and give-and-take between them; and before long, new forces for bringing about synthesis between the two cultural streams took their birth. The subsequent decline and disintegration of the sultanate, instead of proving harmful, gave rather an impetus to the forces of socio-cultural synthesis between hindus and muslims and increased their inter-dependence. Once the foreign Islamic culture and traditions began to intermingle freely with the ancient Indian or hindu culture, they became acceptable to the Indian society in general. The regional muslim rulers and their nobility were mostly Indian in blood, thought and attitude; very few of them traced their foreign pedigree or claimed dominant position in the society on that account; they were Indianised, so to say. Many of the local and regional rulers of fifteenth and sixteenth century India, whether hindus or muslims, were enlightened and benevolent kings who worked for the welfare and happiness of their people and enjoyed their goodwill in abundant measures. Usually they patronised scholars and artists without religious discrimination and helped in the socio-cultural, moral and material advancement of the society; the rulers of Bahmani and Vijayanagar states made a special contribution in this respect in the south. Amir Khusrau, the first prominent representative of the Indo-Muslim society and culture, flourished during the reigns of the Khalji and Tughluq sultans. Urdu; a common literary heritage of hindus and muslims, and a symbolic representation of cultural synthesis between Hinduism, and Islam, was born during this period. The sultans of Delhi, Bahmanis, and the hindu rulers of Vijayanagar and rajput states were great builders. They founded many new townships in various parts of the country which became flourishing centre of trade and commerce. Their architectural monuments reveal a vigorous interaction and synthesis between the foreign Islamic and ancient Indian archaeological concepts, these are an index of a healthy and constructive give-and-take between the two art styles as also the communion that took place between hindus and muslims during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The *bhakti* reformers and *sufi* saints took up the cause of socio-religious reforms and hindu-muslim unity, and attempted to bridge the gulf between the two communities at the socio-cultural level. Babar, the founder of the mughal rule in India, took note of the growing consciousness of common nationhood among the hindus and muslims; he drew a sharp distinction between use of the words *hindis*, viz; 'the people of India' or 'the Indian nationals', and *hindus*, who constituted by

far the most numerous section of the *hindis*. Babar, though foreign in blood and breed, identified his interests with those of the sons of the soil and showed a remarkable quality of adaptation to the new socio-cultural environment, while Sher Shah Sur was himself a product of the age. The Sur interlude (1540-55) symbolises the seed-time of the concept of common Indian nationhood among the hindus and muslims of the country.

The fourth phase in the history of medieval Indian society and culture begins with the reign of Akbar which marks the birth of a secular nation state and flowering of the concept of common Indian nationhood. Akbar initiated the process for the political unification of India by the corporate activity of the nationalist forces, hindu as well as muslim. The invidiousness between the two communities was removed by him in 1564 when he abolished *jaziya* and granted rights of equal citizenship to all of his subjects irrespective of religious, racial or regional considerations. The political unity of the country was consolidated by the evolution of administration, good government and the steel-frame of all-India services, composed of hindus and muslims alike. The secular state policy as pursued by Akbar and his successors, Jahangir and Shah Jahan, provided a requisite environment for the socio-cultural advancement, economic prosperity and all-round development of the Indians in every walk of their national life. The imperial mughals played a premier role in accelerating the process of synthesis between the exotic Islamic traditions and ancient Indian culture and they made invaluable contributions towards the growth and development of the medieval Indian society. To the great misfortune of the Indians, Aurangzeb proved a misfit in the newly emerging framework of a secular nation state, as a result of whose reactionary state policies, the socio-cultural progress of the country received a serious setback. He generated the forces of religious communalism which became a part of the medieval Indian cultural heritage.

GLOSSARY

ahl	one who possesses, competent
ahl i qalam	men of the pen, scholars and writers; bureaucracy of the muslim rulers
ahl i ilm	men of knowledge, scholars, *ulama*
ahl i teg, or ahl i shamshir	men of the sword, nobility of the muslim rulers
a'in	law, statute
alai	of Alauddin Khalji
Allah	God
amil	a revenue official
amir	commander; nobleman; an imperial officer of the third grade after *Khan*; and *malik*; originally the title borne by independent muslim rulers of central Asia (pl. *amiran* or *umara*)
auliya	saint
bakshi	paymaster, treasurer
banjara	grain carrier, corn merchant
barid	intelligence official, spy
beg, bek	an officer of high rank
begam	a muslim lady of rank
bhakti	worship of the Divine, the doctrine of personal devotion to God
burj	a tower
caravan, karwan	group of merchants travelling together who usually carried the merchandise on horsebacks, camels, ponies or carts
chadar	a sheet of cloth, cloth worn over head and shoulders
chaukidar	night or village watchman
chungi	tax, octroi
dabir	secretary, clerk
dagh	mark, branding of the army horses
dargah	a muslim shrine, mausoleum of a saint
dar ul harab, dar ul kufr	land of the infidels
dar ul Islam	land of the muslims; an *Islamic state*
dar ul khilafa	lit. house of the Caliph, imperial capital
darbar, durbar	royal court
din	religion
dinar	silver coin

dirham	copper coin
divan	collection of poetic compositions
diwan	office, central secretariat, royal court, chief revenue officer of a province, finance minister
duniya	the world
faqir	a poor man, a muslim mendicant
farman, firman	royal order, proclamation
fath	victory, conquest
fathnama	royal proclamation, letter or message of victory
fatwa	a legal decision according to Islamic law
faujdar	commander of an army unit, officer in charge of a fort
fiqh	jurisprudence
gaz	yard, a unit of measurement equal to three feet
ghazi	devoted, a muslim who has taken a vow to fight the infidels
ghulam	slave
hakim	physician, philosopher
haram, harem	secluded; female apartments of a household; women of a muslim family
hauz	a pond, water tank
hukm i hasil	assessment of land revenue according to actual produce of the soil
imam	commander, leader; a title for the Caliph; a person leading congregational muslim prayers
in'am	gift, reward
insaf	justice
iqta	a piece of land, a political-cum-administrative division under the sultans
iqtadar, muqta	person in charge of an *iqta*, governor
Ismaili	a sect of the *shia* muslims
jagir	a tract of land assigned by the state; assignment of land or land revenue held by an official in lieu of state service
jama'at	a party
jannat	paradise
jauhar	jewel, precious stone; a virtue; a rajput rite in which the ladies burnt themselves or were killed by their menfolk who sallied forth in saffron garments and laid down their lives in final charge against the enemy
jaziya	a religious tax imposed on non-muslims; any tax other than *khiraj* or land revenue
jihad, jehad	holy war against infidels by muslims

jital, jittal	copper coins, fractional currency of medieval India
kafir	unbeliever, infidel, a non-muslim
kahar	palanquin-bearer, porter
karkhana	factory, assembly of artisans and craftsmen who mechanically produced commodities needed by the royal household and armies
karkun	worker, petty official
khalq	the masses
khan	mongol or turkish ruler of central Asia; officer of the first rank
khanqah	a house of mystics; residential quarters of the mystics
khil'at	a robe of honour
khiraj	land revenue, also tribute paid by a subordinate chief
khuda	God
khut	a village headman
khutba	sermon
khwaja	lord, merchant, a person of status and standing
khwaja sera	eunuch
kotla	a residential fortress, cantonment, a permanent military station
kotwal	officer in charge of a city or fort, a police chief
lashkar	army, army camp
lashkari	a soldier
madad i ma'ash	grant of land or pension to scholars and saints
majlis	meeting place or assembly
maktab	an elementary school
manqul	Islamic theology
masnavi	a poetic composition, a narrative poem
maulana	a muslim scholar, man of learning
mlechcha	unclean foreigner, an infidel from the point of view of hindus
millat	a religious community, muslim brotherhood
minar	a pillar
mulla, mullah	a muslim religious leader or divine
mulk	country
mandi	grain market
munsif	small causes judge
muqaddam	lit. first or seniormost man, village headman
mushrif	officer in charge of treasury and accounts
naib	deputy, a representative
nauroz	muslim new year's day

paibos	kissing of the feet
palki	palanquin or a litter
pir	spiritual guide
purdah	curtain, a muslim practice of keeping women in seclusion
qalandar	a muslim mendicant or wandering *faqir*
qasba	a town
qazi	a judge
qila	a fort
qutb, qutub	pole star, the axis
ra'iyyat	the subjects
sadr	justice of peace and head of the ecclesiastical establishment
sahib	chief
sarai, serai	inn, rest house
saudagar	merchant prince
sayyad	a descendant of the prophet
sheikh	chief, a spiritual leader, muslim mystic
shahna	a police chief, officer in charge of a town or market
tanka	silver coin
thakur	a hindu chief
ulama, ulema	pl. of *alim*, a scholar, a muslim theologian
vakil	agent, deputy, minister
walayat	foreign country, alien land
waqf	an endowment
waqia	an occurrence, an event
wazifa	stipend
zabita	law, statute (pl. *zawabit*)
zakat	a religious tax payable by the muslims in an 'Islamic state'
zamindar	one who holds land under a zamindari system, a collector of land revenue

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□ □ □

Dr J.L. Mehta, a product of the Panjab University, Chandigarh, has had a brilliant academic career; he secured merit scholarships in the 'fourth primary,' 'vernacular final' and matriculation examinations. He established his reputation as a sober and serious historian by his History of the Panjab University, Chandigarh *(P.U. Publication Bureau, Chandigarh, 1968). A specialist in medieval and modern Indian history, and a prolific writer, with proficiency in Urdu, Persian and Tibetan, besides Hindi, Punjabi and Sanskrit, he had published a number of books, articles and monographs long before he opted for the Ph. D. degree which he received from his* alma mater *in 1978.*

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